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The Polish Corridor
by ROBERT DONALD



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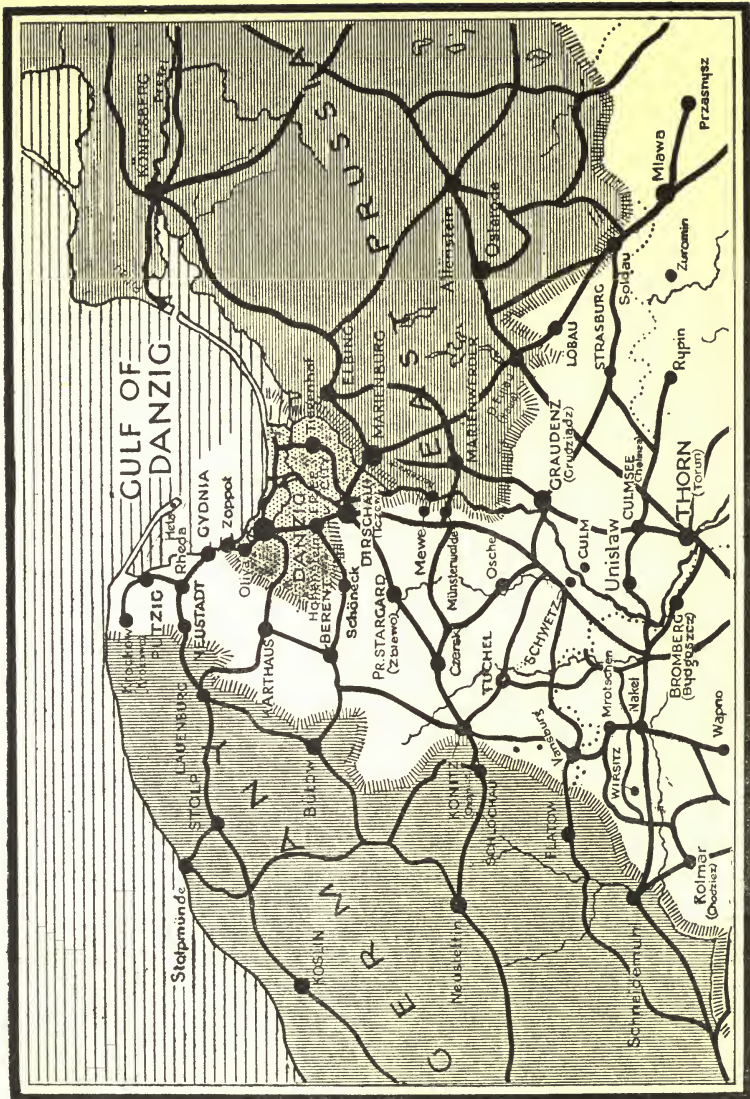
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THE POLISH CORRIDOR
AND THE CONSEQUENCES



The Polish Corridor and Free City of Danzig,
 Showing isolation of East Prussia and cut lines of communication

THE POLISH CORRIDOR AND THE CONSEQUENCES

BY

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“ A DANGER SPOT IN EUROPE ”

AND

“ THE TRAGEDY OF TRIANON ”



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THE POLISH CORRIDOR

I

POLAND AND THE WORLD WAR

POLAND was an embarrassing problem to the Allies in the Great War. The creation of an independent Polish State was within the war aims of Great Britain, but as the majority of the Poles were subjects of Russia, that Empire expected in the event of victory to exercise a predominating voice in the destiny of Poland. The measure of autonomy which the Polish people were to enjoy and the extent of the territory to be conceded to them were to be dependent upon the will of the Czar. Federal union with Russia was also the policy of a large section of the Poles. From 1907 Polish national democracy, antagonised by the resolute measures which the Prussian Government had adopted to counteract the advancing polonisation of the Eastern provinces, threw all its energies into its campaign against Germany.

Russia had begun to be less adamant, and the Poles, giving up attempts at resurrection by revolution, which had left heroic and tragic pages on their history, were trying to obtain concessions from the Russian

autocracy. The Great War was an opportunity. Fear wrung from the Czar what justice failed to obtain : his promise of autonomy applied to the area known as Congress Poland, established after the Congress of Vienna in 1815—soon to be cut up among the powers responsible for its creation : an ominous precedent, as Russia was the chief perpetrator of the outrage.

The Poles did not enter the war as a national unit. Joseph Conrad—born a Pole—in one of his short stories published a few years before the outbreak of war, described Poland as an undying nationality, “not so much alive as surviving, which persists in thinking, hoping, and suffering in its grave, railed in by a million of bayonets, and triple-sealed with the seals of three great Empires.”

The war thus found the Poles living under three empires, each with a different standard of civilisation. The separation was telling upon them : creating differences in their customs, cultural status, occupational pursuits, social and economic conditions and outlook in life. They were getting closer to Russia. Pan-slavism was helping to draw them together. After the promises of Liberals in the Duma they looked forward to and accepted as their goal autonomy under the Russian Empire. They had been granted autonomy by Austria in Galicia, but the Poles belonging to this province were more successful in making reputations outside than in elevating their fellow nationals in the province. For years before the war the Poles were in latent revolt against Prussia. Bismarck’s policy in

Posen and in Pomerellia was a counter-offensive directed against the Poles in matters of language, religion, and colonisation. The policy failed. The Polish Roman Catholic priests, the Peasants' Associations, and cooperative banks in an intensive patriotic campaign defeated Prussian policy. They succeeded because the Poles under Prussia were well-educated, intelligent politicians and in a strong economic position. There was this paradox, that in the territory where they were best off economically and culturally they were the most dissatisfied : in Galicia, where they had most freedom, they were backward in every other respect : under Russia they occupied a middle position. The long years of separation, of oppression, applied in different degrees of severity, and of life under three governments, each with its own laws and customs, had produced distinct standards of civilisation and cultural institutions.

The "undying nationality" was there, racial affinities remained, patriotic associations included Poles living under the three tyrannies : at the same time, the family circle was broken up. When war was declared, Mr. Roman Dmowski and the National Democrats organised a Polish legion to fight with Russia, while Pilsudski led a gallant band of Poles from Galicia to attack the Russian forces. A third scheme for the liberation of the Poles came from the Cracow Committee. Pilsudski afterwards organised a Polish legion to fight with the Germans, and at a later date General Haller raised a legion to fight in France. It was the unfortunate fate

of the Poles that militarism compelled them to fight on both sides, with the risk that members of one family might have found themselves pitted against each other.

In the first stage of the Great War the majority of Polish patriots—those who had not become Robots in the military machine—favoured union with Russia. Belief in the unbreakable power of Russia and trust in the alliance with France justified their faith.

When, after the westward sweep of the Czar's army into East Prussia, Hindenburg in 1915 crushed the Russians in a series of battles in the Masurian swamps, the Poles had to adjust themselves to a new perspective. There was a probability that Germany might conquer Poland, and that Russia, while not defeated, would barter Poland in a settlement. In 1915 and 1916 the war gripped Poland in a vice. The Germans conquered Poland and made Warsaw a military headquarters. In August, 1916, an agreement was reached with Austria-Hungary for establishing "an independent Kingdom of Poland" with a constitutional hereditary monarchy, a national army commanded by German officers, and a fiscal system within the German customs union. The new State was to consist of those portions of Poland not within Germany or Austria—thus excluding some of the most intensely Polish areas from the new Poland. The Polish people were not consulted about their fate.

In the meantime the leaders of Polish patriotism were busy. They had their representatives in Allied

countries planning, hoping, preparing new schemes, carrying on an intensive propaganda—working as they had done for a hundred years for the resurrection of the Polish State and the full expression of Polish nationalism. Early in 1917 the outlook changed. The colossus was crumbling. The Russian revolution took place. Russia collapsed, and ceased to be one of the Allies. It came to terms with Germany. Hardly had the Poles, plunged into the depths of despair by these unforeseen developments, recovered from the shock when the joyful news came that the United States had declared war on the Central Powers. Exit the Czar : enter the President.

Again the Poles had to change their tactics and formulate a new campaign. They felt now that their future was safeguarded : their freedom assured. They could plan with more confidence.

Their emissaries in France, England, and America sought support for a Greater Poland among statesmen. Their appeals and arguments fell on sympathetic ears. The tragedy of Poland had touched the hearts and stirred the imaginations of Western peoples. Polish authors, poets, artists, musicians, idealists—ardent patriots all—had awakened interest and enthusiasm in the Polish cause. The leaders of democracy in Great Britain, America, and France felt for a people broken on the wheel of fate.

The feeling for Poland in England was of the traditional kind—in favour of political liberty and the creation of a democratic Polish State—strengthened

by one of the declared objects of the war, which was to free nationalities from oppression. In the United States the prospect of a new republic, founded on the principles of the American Constitution, was welcomed. France saw in a new Poland a future military ally and a barrier between Germany and Russia.

Only a well-sustained campaign of education succeeded in obtaining a measure of support to the ambitious schemes for the aggrandisement of Poland. The Polish patriots startled the Allies by claiming the whole of Posen, Upper Silesia, West Prussia, and all East Prussia extending to Memel, with the exception of Königsberg, which was to be left a tiny republic within the Polish customs union and under Polish suzerainty. The story of the Polish claim is set out in a book by Mr. Roman Dmowski, the leader of the National Democratic Party. There was to be no self-determination, no "plebiscite comedies": territories inhabited by five or six million Germans were to be transferred to Polish rule. Reasons were advanced for the dismemberment of Germany—many reasons, historical, geographical, ethnological, linguistic, religious, economic, occupational, cultural, political, and strategical. Under one or other of these heads, justification was claimed for the bold reconstruction of the Baltic littoral and North Eastern Europe. Mr. Dmowski worked out a thesis to demonstrate that the danger to European peace lay in leaving Germany in possession of East Prussia. "So long," he wrote, "as Germany possesses East Prussia it will be dissatisfied

because it does not possess more, and so long will East Prussia be a permanent impulse to work for the destruction of Poland." (Dmowski's book was published in 1925.) This policy for the aggrandisement of Poland was not the idea of one patriotic Polish leader. In November, 1917, the Polish National Committee, which must be accepted as representative of Polish nationalism, envisaged the creation of an independent Poland comprising the territories which, before the War, had been in the hands of the three partitioning powers, together with the whole of Silesia and the Baltic littoral from the Vistula to the mouth of the Memel. At the same time the new Poland was to be of such an extent and possess such a population that it would be a decisive force in the maintenance of the European balance of power. The Polish leaders were thinking of resuscitating the old militarised Europe with a different balance of power.

The Allies declined to consider these bold plans. President Wilson, after America was in the War, held faithfully to his principle of government with the consent of the governed. Early in 1918 Mr. Dmowski was in the United States with Paderewski. He wrote : "It became apparent that Wilson was incapable of thinking European. He asked me if it would not be sufficient for us if the lower course of the Vistula were neutralised and Danzig declared a free port." He refused to discuss strategical motives, as he said "the League of Nations would regulate these matters."

A vigorous campaign was conducted in the American press, meetings were held of Americanised Poles at which resolutions were passed demanding the annexation of Posen, Silesia, East and West Prussia, and Danzig. The American delegation preparing material for the Peace Conference had a Polish Section, which at that time was instructed not to concern itself with Prussian Poland. The Poles, according to Mr. Dmowski, soon had that omission repaired: he suggests that the electoral influence of Polish-Americans had something to do with turning the scales.

France viewed Polish ambitions with equanimity, if not with satisfaction. In December, 1917, M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, said that France would not separate Poland's cause from her own, and declared that France wished to see "a sturdy, free, and independent Poland, with every guarantee for political, economic, and military development, and with all the consequences arising therefrom."

Mr. Lloyd George did not fall under the spell of the Greater Poland enthusiasts: his sympathy was restrained, his policy qualified. Mr. Dmowski was much perturbed and attributed the British Prime Minister's attitude, especially his devotion to plebiscites, to some malign influence. At the same time the Poles placed their faith in the Peace Conference: they were not mistaken, although in some degree disappointed.

II

POLAND AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

PROSPECTING AND PLANNING

UNLIKE Italy, the Balkans, Constantinople, and Asia Minor, Poland was not the subject of a secret treaty between the Allies while the war was in progress. In those cases, the Allies, as Lord Balfour expressed it, presented the discreditable spectacle of "dividing the bearskin before the bear was killed." In the case of Poland the bearskin was claimed by Russia and the only secret accord affecting Poland was that entered into between France and Russia in 1917 (February 12th and 14th) a month before the fall of the Russian Government and the entry of America into the war. This agreement gave Russia a free hand in settling the destiny of Poland.

There had been fugitive conversations between Allied statesmen on the future of Poland, but nothing definite had emerged except the conviction that there should be a Polish nation set up with as large a measure of independence as possible under the ægis of Russia and that the new State should have an outlet to the Baltic. Lord Balfour discussed tentative proposals

with Colonel House when he went to America on his special mission in February, 1917. He took with him a map of Europe showing an outline of the new territorial distribution as planned in secret treaties by the Allies and in conversation with Colonel House on February 28th, 1917,¹ touched on the problem of Poland. "The stumbling block," said Lord Balfour, "was the outlet to the sea. There can be no other excepting Danzig. This would leave an Alsace and Lorraine to rankle and fester for future trouble." In a foot-note Professor Charles Seymour, editor of the House Papers, remarks :

"German protests against this Corridor which was established by the peace treaties are clear evidence of the extent to which it constituted a factor of unrest."

Balfour thought that Danzig might be made a free port and in that way satisfy Poland. Colonel House, at the time did not look upon this proposal with favour, "particularly since the Germans and Poles would be antagonistic and ready at the slightest provocation to find grievances against one another," although at the same time, he advocated a restored and rejuvenated Poland, big and powerful enough to serve as a buffer State between Germany and Russia.

In another talk with Colonel House on the future of Poland, Lord Balfour said his "objection to a Polish State cutting off Russia from Germany was whether it would not hurt France more than Germany for the reason it would prevent Russia from coming to

France's aid in the event of an attack by Germany."

Colonel House did not share this view; he was thinking of a Russia of fifty years hence, and invited Balfour not to look upon Germany as a permanent enemy.¹

These informal discussions before the war ended did not lead far. From the spring of 1917 to the Peace Conference Polish patriots carried on a vigorous and well-organised campaign in the United States, England and France, in favour of a Greater Poland. Their objective was enlarged, their hopes stimulated: particularism disappeared.

While they were handicapped in the war by the inexorable force which divided them they presented a united front at the Peace Conference. Their leaders made desperate efforts to get Poland accepted as an ally in the hope that she would emerge a Great Power. Mr. Dmowski, Mr. Paderewski, and other valiant leaders of Polish nationalism had worked with good effect on the politicians and the press of America, England, and France, and on January 15th, 1919, M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister notified the Polish National Committee that it had been decided to admit two Polish delegates to the Conference on the peace preliminaries on January 18th. The National Committee appointed Mr. Dmowski as the chief delegate and Mr. Paderewski provisionally as the second.

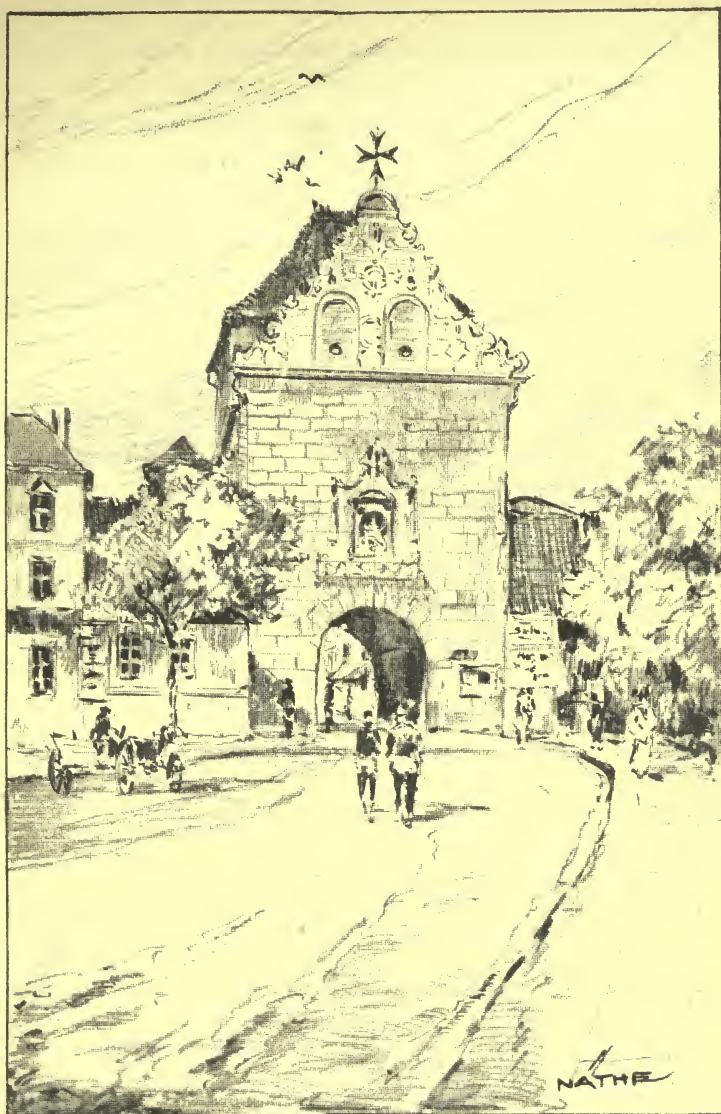
No time was lost. Messrs. Dmowski and Piltz appeared before the Council of Ten as Polish delegates on January 29th. Mr. Dmowski made a report on

¹ The Intimate Papers of Colonel House. Ernest Benn, Ltd.

conditions in Poland. He also spoke for five hours in stating Poland's case and Polish claims. The demarcation of the Polish frontier was handed over to a Commission on Polish Affairs, which began its work on February 12th. The president was M. Jules Cambon, and the vice-president, General Le Rond of the French army. Poland was assured of sympathy at the top. In February a Commission consisting of University professors and experts arrived in Paris from the Polish National Government. Dmowski's committee had previously presented their demands to President Wilson on October 8th, 1918, supplemented by Poland's claims in regard to Poland's future western frontiers. At M. Cambon's request a memorandum was presented with regard to the eastern frontier.

The western frontier was to be substantially identical with the frontier which Mr. Dmowski had previously demanded in his memoranda, with the exception that Poland was to receive the Province of Posen as it was in 1771, together with those parts of the Kreis of Stolp lying to the east of the town of Stolp and extending to the sea in addition to the Kreise of Lauenburg and Buetow already demanded.

In the east the Polish committee demanded not an ethnographic Poland which the Nationalists had asked for since 1907, but the historic frontiers of 1771. Since, however, the Government districts of Kiew, Mohilew, and Witebsk and the eastern part of the Government of Minsk were in the throes of anarchy,



CULM: GRAUDENZ GATE

Mr. Dmowski renounced these territories in the name of the Polish State, "with regret." The eastern frontier demanded was substantially conterminous with that which followed the first partition.

The Polish Commission of experts, who worked independently of Mr. Dmowski's Polish Committee, presented the Peace Conference with a memorandum giving reasons on historical grounds why Danzig should be included in the New Poland. "Permanent peace will be impossible so long as the sources of the Polish national river are in the hands of the enemies of Poland and of humanity." The experts also showed cause why Elbing should also be incorporated in Poland and the whole delta of the Vistula in order to effect the isolation of East Prussia. They argued: "The territorial isolation of East Prussia, this nidus of Prussian militarism, is necessary for permanent peace, and must lead to a voluntary and progressive de-germanisation of this important strategical territory, from which the Prussian dynasty set forth to conquer the world."

The experts argued quite logically that the de-germanisation of East Prussia could only be accomplished by its extinction and their plan included the annexation of the whole of the territory with the exception of the Republic of Königsberg, which was to be united as closely as possible with Poland. Masuria was to be given to Poland on ethnological grounds because it had been colonised by Poles. In cases where Germans had admittedly been colonisers they were treated as

intruders and the territories allotted to Poland on geographical, historical, economic, strategical or any other grounds, in order that frontier rectifications might be carried out in favour of Poland.

M. Cambon's Commission conceded to a large extent the Polish demands : the exceptions were the retention by Germany of the western (German) districts of the Province of Posen ; East Prussia and part of West Prussia were to remain with Germany, but Danzig and the estuary of the Vistula, including Marienwerder, were to go to Poland.

Discussion in the Peace Conference was preceded by an interchange of acid communications between Mr. Lloyd George and M. Clemenceau. It was a prelude which boded ill for harmonious action. It brought out the clash between the two statesmen which turned partly on the fate of Poland. Mr. Lloyd George in his Memorandum of February, 1919, had outlined his views on the lines which the whole peace settlement should follow and was emphatic in his opposition to a "strong Poland." President Wilson thought that in face of the disarmament of Germany Poland should be satisfied with an army of defence sufficient to keep the country in order, but he was uncertain about the eastern frontier. Mr. Dmowski reiterated his demands for a big army and a strong Poland, and was backed by France. M. Clemenceau looked upon unsatisfied national sentiment as a fruitful source of Bolshevism : Mr. Lloyd George feared that an exasperated and dismembered Germany would be an easier breeding

ground for Spartacism. He told M. Clemenceau that "what France really cares for is that the Danzig Germans should be handed over to the Poles." Poland had become one of the thorny points between them which was to be a constant irritant and more than once threatened disruption of their relations.

At a critical stage in the Peace negotiations (June, 1919) conditions in Poland were disturbing. Mr. Paderewski, the then Prime Minister, addressed a despairing appeal to Colonel House. On the one hand, Poland was overrun by revolutionary elements. Outrages were committed by undisciplined German soldiers and the people were in a state of helpless misery. He alleged that the soldiers fired on women and children, used explosive and dum-dum bullets, and committed all kinds of terrible outrages. He had not the slightest doubt that the Spartacist movement in Germany and the Bolshevist revolution were closely connected and intended to meet on Polish soil. "Poland," he said, "cannot defend itself. We have no food, no uniforms, no arms, no munitions." It was a wild, somewhat incoherent appeal: he excused himself for his "chaotic writing," but the appeal influenced Colonel House and Poland secured help in food, arms, and men.

Meanwhile, the unanimous decision of the Cambon Territorial Commission had come before the inner circle of the Peace Conference and Polish ambitions had met their first official check.

III

THE ORIGIN OF THE CORRIDOR

AT this stage we come to grips with the Eastern frontier problem, and the evolution of the Corridor. The decision rested with M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, and President Wilson. Signor Orlando was little more than an onlooker. Clemenceau was the only one of the Big Four who knew definitely what he wanted, and never swerved from his objective—which was to smash Germany to defenceless atoms, making her for ever helpless as a military force and worthless as a balancing factor in European politics, and at the same time to build up by any and every means a strong Poland to serve as the military ally of France. President Wilson had no fixed policy. He wobbled. He was pulled hither and thither by his experts, while trying to live up to his reputation as the man who could make the world safe for democracy.

The future historian of the Great War will have to decide whether the contribution which President Wilson made to the settlement was more than counterbalanced by the legacies which he left behind. He contributed new phrases which endure although they only reiterated old doctrines. He was obsessed with

his policy of self-determination which he had nurtured before he crossed the Atlantic and presented in varied texts to the distressed and hungry people of the Old World, in a mood to swallow shibboleths of peace.

There was nothing original about the Wilsonian formula. It was enshrined in the declaration of American independence—"Governments deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed"—it was sanctified by Lincoln's immortal declaration on the battlefield of Gettysburg, before it was crystallised in the Fourteen Points. Its object was to make the world safe for democracy and democracy safe for the world.

Self-determination was not an American patent. Its homeland was England. It migrated across the Atlantic like other conceptions of human liberty and was to find fuller expression in the free atmosphere of a new country. Presented afresh by President Wilson with all the prestige of the American Commonwealth—which he was supposed to personify—behind him, it made a profound impression on distracted Europe, and especially upon the victorious Allies preparing to reshape the Continent.

It was all the more disappointing, therefore, to find President Wilson, in the case of Poland, falling away from his lofty ideals. More than any other member of the Peace Conference President Wilson was the creator of the New Poland.

When faced with decisions incompatible with his theories he did not defend himself: he looked to the future League of Nations, in which he had implicit

faith, to make rectifications, to right wrongs which might be committed in the contentious atmosphere of the Peace Conference, and to see that the Minority Treaties, brought within his scheme, were faithfully carried out.

Mr. Lloyd George knew what he wanted. He did not agree either with Clemenceau or Wilson. In his memorandum of March 25th, 1919, he propounded the principles which should guide the Peace Conference in drawing up the frontiers of new Europe on a basis which was in harmony with the war aims of Great Britain and on lines which would minimise the risks of future conflict. This remarkable document did not receive the attention which it deserved, and Mr. Lloyd George himself was unable to secure the acceptance of all his principles in the Peace Treaties. He fought his colleagues; he had to contend against time. When he failed to persuade, he argued, cajoled, threatened, and in the end compromised. He took his stand, as if to make a bold stroke, but—in golfing parlance—did not follow through. Nevertheless, but for the concessions which he won the simmering pot of the eastern frontier would long since have boiled over. More than likely there would have been no peace treaty, but a period of chaos, and Bolshevik eruptions which would have engulfed the whole of Central Europe and Germany. Mr. Dmowski congratulated himself that “it was fortunate that the Territorial Commission completed its work before the influence of Mr. Lloyd George on the Supreme Council had

become so great that he could enforce his own programme." Mr. Dmowski's rejoicing was somewhat premature. Mr. Lloyd George had no desire to hinder the legitimate demands of Poland to set up a new State in accordance with the principles formulated in President Wilson's Fourteen Points—first published in January, 1918¹—point 13 of which reads :

"An independent Polish State should be erected, which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, and which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic and territorial independence should be guaranteed by International Covenant."

Mr. Lloyd George made a similar declaration also in January, 1918,—as Col. House wrote in his papers,

¹"Mr. Balfour cabled to Wilson on January 5th, urging the President to make a statement. This cablegram was sent before another from Colonel House from Washington to Balfour stating that the President wished to inform them that he must presently make some specific utterance of peace terms."

"On May 26th the President addressed a note to the Russian Government in which he said :

"Wrongs must be righted, and then adequate safeguards must be created to prevent their being committed again. . . . But they must follow a principle, and that principle is plain. No people must be forced under sovereignty under which it does not wish to live. No territory must change hands except for the purpose of securing those who inhabit it a fair chance of life and liberty. No indemnities must be insisted on except those that constitute payment for manifest wrongs done. No readjustments of power must be made except such as will tend to secure the future peace of the world and the future welfare and happiness of its peoples."—"The Intimate Papers of Colonel House."

“on the very day that President Wilson was drafting his speech of the Fourteen Points” Mr. Lloyd George declared for “an independent Poland comprising all genuine Polish elements who desire to form part of it as an urgent necessity for the stability of Western Europe.” There was an implication here that the people would have an opportunity of expressing their desires.

President Wilson was more emphatic than Mr. Lloyd George in insisting on the principle of self-determination, although he was the first to forget it. In his Four Points delivered at Mount Vernon on July 4th, 1918 he laid down the principle that the settlement of every question should not be “upon the basis of the material interest, or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery,” and also ; “What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organised opinion of mankind.”

When the question came before the Council of Four Mr. Lloyd George made a general onslaught on the recommendation of the Cambon Commission. He cut down the Polish claims to free and secure access to the sea and administration of territories inhabited, in his own words, by “essentially Polish elements,” or as President Wilson said, “indisputably Polish populations.” “Poland,” he said, “is to be given a corridor to Danzig, but this is to be drawn irrespective of strategic or transportation considerations so as to

embrace the smallest possible number of Germans." Mr. Lloyd George is the originator of the Corridor in name and in fact, but what his conception of the width of the Corridor was—whether the Vistula and a railway or not—he did not say. At any rate, he insisted on the Wilsonian principle that the settlement of this question should not be based on strategic or national interests. He was successful in getting plebiscites for the districts of Marienwerder and Allenstein, which it was proposed to hand over to Poland for historical, strategic and transportation considerations. He did not include Soldau, a district with an area of 120,000 acres, and a mixed population of Germans, Masures, and Poles, in his plebiscitary plans. It was allotted to Poland for strategic reasons. Mr. Lloyd George succeeded, on a threat of withdrawing from the Peace Conference, in getting self-determination applied to Upper Silesia, and finally compromised on Danzig—which his colleagues insisted on giving to Poland and which he considered should be retained by Germany—by agreeing to its creation as a free city under the League of Nations, the interests of Poland in the port to be safeguarded.

While territorially the Corridor is small, the most momentous of the eastern frontier problems arise out of it, or revolve round it. Ever since the settlement Polish historians, geographers, and political writers have set themselves to prove that this part of West Prussia—Pomerellia—is Polish by all the rights which entitle a people to possess territory : historic,

ethnographical, political, linguistic, religious, cultural. The Germans take up the challenge to prove the contrary. The controversy need not detain us in describing the territory—which was not assigned to Poland for any of these reasons—and the inhabitants, who were transferred from one sovereignty to another without being consulted.

The Corridor may be defined as being almost conterminous with former Pomerellia, which was afterwards called West Prussia. The territory of the Corridor—now one of the fourteen Voivodeships, or provinces, into which Poland is divided—extends to 16,295 square kilometres. It is 230 kilometres in length and varies in width from between 80 to over 200 kilometres at its southern end to 30 kilometres at its narrowest point towards the north. It has a sea frontage of 76 kilometres, and with the narrow Hela Peninsula, which curves round towards the harbour of Danzig, of 146 kilometres. The population of the Corridor is now over a million. The historical and political division between Pomerellia and Posen is the line of the Netze Canal, constructed by Frederick the Great. Frederick reclaimed the whole of the territory forming the eastern block of the Corridor and put it into communication by water with East Prussia and other parts of his kingdom. Up to 1928 there was an almost solid German population in the Netze Valley and a predominant German population in the towns of Bromberg and Thorn. It was an ethnological “bridge” forming a connection between East Prussia and the

rest of Germany. The Poles were numerous both farther south and farther north. The last German census for 1910 gave the relative numerical strength of Germans and Poles according to language as follows:—

	GERMANS	POLES	CASHUBES	BI-LINGUAL
Former West Prussia ...	412,807	432,872	104,474	14,805
Netze Valley	191,014	112,974	—	2,630
	603,821	545,846	104,474	17,435

(The above figures exclude Danzig and the areas retained by Germany.)

If one were to add the Cashubes to the Poles—and the Poles claim them—there would be a majority of Poles. On the other hand, if we add the population of the Free City of Danzig—part of which is carved out of the Corridor and the whole of which is inseparably connected with the territory—the proportion is reversed. In 1910 the population of Danzig was :—

GERMANS	POLES	CASHUBES	BI-LINGUAL
315,281	9,491	2,124	3,021

The total figures for the Corridor and Danzig combined were therefore :—

GERMANS	POLES	CASHUBES	BI-LINGUAL
919,102	555,337	106,598	20,456

There is no reason to suppose that there was any great variation in the relative numbers between 1910 and the outbreak of the Great War. A complete revolution has taken place since the Peace Treaty. The Polish census of 1921 shows that the Corridor contained 80.4 per cent. Poles. The results of local and parliamentary

elections would-indicate a larger percentage of Germans—or of voters who vote German, which is not necessarily the same thing.

The Germans claim that a plebiscite of the Corridor including Danzig would have shown a majority in favour of Germany. There was never any question of the application of self-determination to settle the question whether Poland should or should not have access to the sea : that was a fundamental principle which could not be risked or weakened by consulting the inhabitants.

IV

CONDITIONS IN THE CORRIDOR

FORMERLY the Corridor territory was an integral part of Prussia. Communications and the flow of trade went from east to west and vice versa. Railways and waterways were constructed to facilitate traffic across country, while the Vistula was used as one of the main arteries for sea-going traffic.

The physical character and geographical conditions of the Corridor are highly varied. It marches on the south with Posnania (Posen province), a rich agricultural country, flat and dotted with villages: it combines industry and agriculture, forestry and grazing.

The southern end of the Corridor is largely industrial. It contains the chief city in the territory, Bromberg, now Bydgoszcz. Before the war the Prussian Government assisted in the development of Bromberg. Bromberg is an exceedingly well-built city with magnificent public institutions, technical schools, colleges of music and art, academies, museums, chiefly located in the broad boulevards lined with trees and divided in the middle with flower beds. With its parks and gardens and trees—numbering one for each house—Bromberg was looked upon as a garden city. It

possessed a highly developed municipal life—hydro-electric power, gas works dating from 1858, municipal water supplies, new sewage disposal works, municipal abattoirs, electric tramways, splendidly equipped hospitals, municipal theatre and other civic institutions. It was a centre of cultural institutions and of trade and professional organisations.

With its railways and water connections it formed a junction, a clearing house for trade between East and West Prussia and the rest of Germany, including Upper Silesia. It was an *entrepôt*—a centre of the wholesale trade. Industrial undertakings in Bromberg included timber and woodwork factories, sugar factories, flour mills, metal and machine works, distilleries, etc. Its leather industries have an historic reputation. Thorold Rogers, the well-known English economic historian, in his "Economic Interpretation of History," complains that owing to the supremacy of Pomerania only a small part of the imported leather could be manufactured in England, and it was a produce of Pomerania. He added that he was glad that another branch of the Teutonic race had invented something besides metaphysics.

I direct attention to the historic and industrial importance of the city of Bromberg in order to emphasise the rich inheritance which fell to Poland and the consequent pain and chagrin of the Germans in finding their treasured institutions in other hands. Not satisfied with the instruction in the German language, history and literature, now given in the

former magnificent secondary technical high schools and colleges, the resident Germans in order to maintain the nucleus of a German culture have established two private secondary schools : one is attended by 400 girls, who are housed in a former flat, while the other is attended by a similar number of boys. There is one head board of administration, but each school has its individual board and is responsible for the conduct of its school. Scholars who have been educated at the private schools are admitted to Polish universities on passing examinations including Polish history and literature. The questions are asked in Polish and can be replied to in German except in the case of Polish history and literature.

Bromberg had a population of 75,000 before the war, of which 89 per cent. were German. The suburbs, inhabited mainly by Poles of the poorer classes, were added to the city in 1920 and the population is now 113,000, of which, according to Polish authority, only 8 per cent. are German. There was an exodus of Germans when the Poles took possession. All officials went, after assisting the Poles to effect the transfer. German traders were boycotted, others were expropriated, some opted for Polish nationality, while there was an inrush of Polish officials and immigrants. The Poles are maintaining the institutions of the town and in some cases adding to them, but there has been a lowering of the social and cultural standard of the population.

The southern section of the Corridor was predominantly German. It was known as the German bridge

because of its almost exclusively German character : the bridge stretched eastward beyond Bromberg and Thorn, with a branch north-eastward to Graudenz, and on to the present border of West Prussia.

The next important town in the southern belt of the Corridor is Thorn, on the Vistula, which was founded by the Teutonic Knights, and is celebrated for its historic town hall. I was shown over this building by a Pole who had been a prisoner of war in England. It is a trading port on the Vistula and has some important manufactures. The external atmosphere of Thorn is thoroughly German. The proportion of the two races has been reversed as in the case of Bromberg.

Graudenz, on the right bank of the Vistula, is another industrial town thoroughly German in character. For a town of 50,000 inhabitants it is exceptionally well equipped with local institutions, and 6,000 pupils attend its schools and colleges, which include commercial and industrial and engineering schools. It holds second place as an industrial town in Pomerellia. Thorn and Graudenz were strongly fortified by Germany and their military importance has not diminished under Poland.

The villages throughout the area are very largely Polish. The influence of the German minority cannot be overlooked. They are the leading manufacturers, traders, and merchants : they own the largest estates, the largest sugar factories, and the richest agricultural land. Farmers go in for breeding pedigree stock, the export trade in which has been seriously interfered with



THORN: TOWN HALL

by their being cut off from their former markets in Germany. Pigs are bred by the thousand for export to England through Danzig. I attended a horse-show held in the midst of a birch forest near the German frontier, where there was an excellent display of well-bred animals, riding, driving, jumping competitions, which would not have been out of place at the Richmond Horse Show. All exhibitors and competitors were German.

The property of these Germans, however, is being expropriated unless they adopt Polish nationality, the legal right to which, however, under the Treaty of Versailles, was only vested in a part of the German population. In this industrialised part of the Corridor the population has not only undergone a change racially, but also in character. The incoming Poles represent a much lower standard of civilisation and the two sections of the population do not live on intimate terms. In spite of their diminished numbers the Germans elected three deputies to the Polish Sejm.

The whole of the middle portion of the Corridor is predominantly Polish. It consists of poor territory cultivated by Polish peasants who own their own land. There is a very large expanse of forest and heath land, including the Tuchel Heath, which is sparsely populated.

V

THE CASHUBES OF THE CORRIDOR

THE Cashubes, to whom reference has been made, are the key people of the Corridor. They are the remains of a very ancient tribe.

The borders of the Baltic have been the breeding ground and nursery of tribes who multiplied or diminished, rose to prominence or sank into obscurity, according to the fortunes of the warring races and marauding hordes who made the shores of the northern sea their battlefield. Here the early centuries of the Christian era witnessed a struggle for mastery among a welter of wild peoples—heathen Prussians and Lithuanians, and various types of Slavs and Teutons—Poles, Cashubes, Goths, and Vikings. A powerful conqueror with capacity as an organiser might have arisen who could have merged these tribes and correlated races into a nationality which, as Balts, might have been a new northern race reigning on the Baltic littoral from Riga to Danzig. The course of history, however, determined otherwise, and left along the shores of the Baltic an entanglement of racial units and residues which has troubled Europe throughout the centuries

and which still contains the gravest latent menace to the peace of the world.

The Cashubes are one of these ancient residues. East Prussia has also its Slavs—the Masures—who, however, settled between the 14th and 17th centuries. They have no affinity with the Cashubes, apart from Slav origin. The two peoples have never had any intercourse. Their languages are different, but both are dialects either based on or cognate with Polish. The Poles claim them as kinsmen. The Cashubes are Roman Catholics: the Masures are Protestant. They have escaped assimilation by the races amidst whom they lived and have not been dispersed.

Where the Cashubes, with whom I am concerned in the present chapter, came from can only be surmised. They live in the north-western section of the Corridor, which they share with Poles and Germans. They still number over 100,000. They have more natural claims to the territory which they occupy than any other race, as it has been their home from remote ages. At one time their ancestors occupied the whole of Pomerania and the area between the Vistula and the Oder, stretching south to the Netze and the Warthe and north to the Baltic. They have diminished in numbers owing to emigration and the germanisation or polonisation of their educated classes, and they are now to be found only in the western part of the Corridor from Konitz to Neustadt, thinning as they near the sea. Professor E. H. Minns,

lecturer on Palæography at Cambridge, writing in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (1911) estimated their numbers at 200,000, but a more reasonable estimate would probably be in the neighbourhood of 110,000. Their importance, on the other hand, has increased because of their hostility to the Prussian Kulturkampf before the war and their former political alliance with the Poles.

Professor Minns expresses the opinion that the Cashube language resembles Polab rather than Polish, which is also the view held by Dr. Lorentz, the historian of the Cashubes. The Polabs themselves have disappeared as a separate body and are represented in the Wends, who are also reduced to meagre dimensions. The language or dialect of the Cashubes bears somewhat the same relationship to Polish as Slovak does to Czech, Danish to Swedish, or Dutch to German. The Cashubes have succeeded in preserving distinct characteristics, physical and psychological, manners, and mode of life. Their concentration and preservation have been aided by their religion, which was also a more potent factor than speech in strengthening the ties between them and the Poles.

They live in a picturesque country, hard, cold, inhospitable. It is winter for seven months of the year. It is a country of many lakes, mountains, ridges, racing rivers, steep slopes and great forests. It has been likened to a small Switzerland. The Baltic ridge which divides the German plain forms a watershed in Cashubia. Owing to heavy rainfall it is the source of

many rivers: some of which are tributaries of the Vistula, some fall into the Baltic, while others flow westward, joining the Warthe and the Oder. There are hundreds of lakes. Lakes are found quite near the sea, including one, Lake Zarnowitz, which covers 3,400 acres. The land becomes more fertile nearer the Baltic: it is low-lying and marshy and has been reclaimed by drainage. An ridge of sand dunes forms some protection from the cold north winds. The sea coast of the Corridor is part of a broad headland jutting into the Baltic, and from the middle one commands a view stretching to Germany in the west, and eastward to the town of Hela in the peninsula of that name.

The richer lands in Cashubia have always belonged to Germans, and the owners of many large estates and forests are also Germans who have been settled here for centuries. They are the chief territorial magnates, and give the best examples of scientific agriculture in the country. There are cases in which property has been in the possession of the same family for seven hundred years. Some of the leading families are of Cashubian origin. One representative of this ancient race gave me an exhibition of his rolls of parchment which dated from the thirteenth century. These documents were either in German or Latin.

The Cashubes are chiefly peasants, smallholders, workers on the land, village tradesmen or fishermen. The typical Cashubes are small of stature, usually blue eyed and fair haired. The chief crops are potatoes and rye, which form the staple food of the people. During

the potato harvest I saw family groups at work in the fields, the women and children in bare feet. Oats are grown, but the climate is not quite suitable for wheat. Barley, which is produced in other parts of the Corridor, is not widely grown. Pasturage is poor and stock-breeding is not made a business. There are few sheep. Pigs are bred in great numbers and are sold to Danzig dealers for the English markets. The peasants keep geese and goats, who feed in the fields and by the roadsides in summer and autumn.

The Cashubes remain a somewhat primitive community. They have no ideals. They are devoid of initiative in political action, are content to be led, and are easily exploited. They want to cultivate their fields; to live peacefully under the conditions which suit their habits and characteristics. Their grievances in pre-war times were provoked by the short-sighted reactionary policy of Prussia. They feared that in some way through the attempted suppression of Polish their religion was in danger during a period when the rise of democratic feeling in Germany was thwarted and not allowed expression in representative Parliamentary Government. It was precisely during this period, beginning two decades before the War, that there was a keen revival of Polish nationalism carried out by vigorous campaigns beyond the borders of Congress Poland. This propaganda found ready adherents among the Cashubes.

It has been the misfortune of the Cashubes that they are not a people with highly developed political

instincts, in which respect they differ from the Poles ; nor have they the gift of system and organisation, thereby contrasting strikingly with the Germans. They have neither been polonised nor germanised. Because of their low standard of natural intelligence and their lack of receptivity feudal authority lingered longer among them than in any other part of the Baltic provinces. The nineteenth century had run half its course before the last vestiges of feudalism had disappeared from Cashubian territory.

In the first part of the nineteenth century the Prussians encouraged peasant ownership and the Cashubians were fairly satisfied. They took no part in Polish insurrections. Later on, by a series of ill-considered laws, Prussia threw the Cashubes into the arms of the Poles. One was the revocation of the law of usury which was followed by heavy rates of interest extracted from the Cashube farmers who had always been dependent on credit. The Poles established banks which gave them a further hold on the population. The Kulturkampf which began in 1872 widened the rift between the Cashubes and Prussia, which was intensified in the following years by the abolition of Polish in the schools, bitter objection being taken to the holding of school prayers in German, as the Cashubes did not consider that German was a language which was understood by the Almighty. This was followed later on by a school strike : children refusing to use any other than Polish in their religious instruction and prayers. During this strike, says Dr. Lorentz,

the Cashubes realised the intention of the Government to germanise them, and the inevitable issue was a firm determination to defend their language and nationality. Dr. Lorentz points out that from 1890 the economic status of the unpropertied working classes improved and season work took the place of emigration. Their savings increased and were deposited with the Polish banks which sprang up on every hand. The capital of these banks was used chiefly to assist the transfers of real estate : banks which did not carry on parcelling themselves worked in conjunction with parcelling banks. Between 1896 and 1905 Poles acquired no fewer than 35,000 acres in the Cashube country, and were thus able to drive a wedge between the Germans in the Vistula and those in the west of Pomerellia.

The resident Polish-Cashube population increased, a process which the Supplementary Colonisation Law of 1904 sought to hinder by making the creation of new farmsteads almost impossible. This law provoked intense hatred among the Cashubes.

The Expropriation Law of 1908 effected a reconciliation between the Cashube peasantry and the nobility by its menace of the latter, in whom the peasants now saw persecuted compatriots. But the Cashubes still lacked any sentiment of Polish nationality. The Pole no longer sold his land to the German : his slogan was, "National to National !" The Cashube, on the other hand, was indiscriminate.

Had a plebiscite been taken in 1920 the Corridor would have been thrown into the same confusion as

was Upper Silesia. Patches would have been predominantly Polish, other districts would have been German, while in large sections the races would have been inextricably mixed. In the coastal County or Circle of Neustadt the Germans, in 1910, had a clear majority over Cashubes and Poles—the latter being only 3.2 per cent., while in the other Coastal county of Putzig there was a majority of Cashubes and only 8.27 per cent. of Poles. The Poles now declare that in the whole of Pomerellia the Germans only represent about 21 per cent. of the adult population. At the communal elections in 1926 the Germans secured about one-third of the members, and at the elections for the Polish Sejm had about 15 per cent. of the votes.

About half a million Germans have left the Corridor alone since the partition and their places have been taken by Poles. A plebiscite of the present resident population would not correspond with the relative strength of parties in 1919.

It is fairly clear that in the Cashubian country the native population hold the balance, and in the attitude and sympathies of these people a great change is apparent. During the half-century which preceded the world war they had, as I have shown, gradually become pro-Polish. In the elections they consistently voted for the Polish candidates, and no single German was returned to the Reichstag from the districts inhabited by them. Immediately after the war they held aloof from the general elections to the Reichstag and to the Prussian Diet. They welcomed with enthusiasm the

occupation of the country by Polish troops in January, 1920. They have been disappointed, however, with the conditions which have followed. They expected autonomy, and they resented the place-hunters who came from Congress Poland and Galicia. At the Communal Elections which have taken place since, their sympathies have been divided, but at the recent elections for the Sejm, for the first time in their history, they returned a German. This reaction would suggest that the Cashubes are not satisfied with their new rulers and are showing increasing sympathy with Germany. Their economic position is probably not so good as it was before, and there has been a deterioration in the system of administration. Local taxation is also higher as local authorities do not receive the same assistance from the State as they did under Prussia. It is also more difficult for them to find markets for their agricultural products. Their free outlet is confined to Danzig and the new port of Gdynia, as the rest of Poland is not in need of agricultural products. They are hemmed in on both sides by Germany and tariff walls. They are obsessed with a new fear : they feel that they live within a danger zone.

VI

THE VISTULA AS A WATERWAY

FROM the majestic Vistula Poland draws her life-blood, according to Polish contemporary writers. The river is an important element in the Polish organism, geographically, economically, and politically. For the first time in history it is within the borders of the country from its source in the Carpathians to its outlet to the sea at Danzig. It flows through the middle of the vast plain which constitutes the Polish State. With its tributaries it forms a basin covering nearly half of the whole area of the country. The chief cities of the Republic are situated on its banks : Cracow, the old capital : Warsaw, the new capital : the former German towns of Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz, Dirschau. The river is 1,100 kilometres in length : its course is through a wide, sandy, low-lying alluvial valley. The lowest point in the main watershed of the Continent from the Pyrenees to the Urals is reached by the Vistula and its tributaries.

The Vistula enjoys a greater immunity from ice than any of the other Polish rivers : it is ice-free from 240 to 290 days in the year, and in some winters the ice does not interrupt navigation. In its lower reaches the river

demands a great deal of elbow-room. Bridges over the Vistula may extend for a mile over meadows subject to floods, which occur four or five times a year.

At these periods the volume of water in the Vistula rises several feet in a few hours and gathers tremendous force on its seaward journey.

The Vistula is not kept within bounds by natural banks, and if a well-defined channel is not maintained by artificial works the river, after floods subside, will change its bed. Like other rivers, the Vistula has been made navigable by engineering skill, but unlike most other waterways it cannot be relied upon to keep within its dykes and embankments without continual vigilance and expensive conservancy works.

Before the war the sections of the upper course of the river which touched the Austrian border were embanked, and this section for a distance of 185 kilometres is now regulated by International Convention. The lower part of the river, formerly in Germany, for a distance of 222 kilometres was subject to constant attention from the Prussian Government, which, during the nineteenth century, spent vast sums in canalising and embanking the Vistula, in maintaining a fleet of dredgers, installing numerous flood-measuring posts and buoys, and in collecting hydrographic data in the interest of navigation.

The Vistula was not only a great highway for commerce in itself, but was linked up with other rivers, the Oder, the Elbe, the Warthe, the Niemen, and a network of canals dating back to the days of Frederick

the Great, throughout East Prussia, Pomerellia, Posen, and well into Germany.

The war improved the position of rivers as international highways—the Danube, the Rhine, the Elbe—but the Vistula was overlooked, except that the section of the river formerly the Austro-Russian frontier is regulated by international convention, which prescribes the expenditure of capital on permanent works and an annual outlay for maintenance.

The Peace Treaty allotted to Poland the right bank of the Vistula until it reaches the Free City of Danzig, where for about forty-five kilometres it forms the boundary line. Between Graudenz and Stuhm the Polish frontier extends a few feet on the East Prussian side following the base of the embankment on the river side.

The frontier between East Prussia and Poland along the course of the Vistula should, according to ancient practice and the principles of general international law, coincide with the middle of the main navigable water channel. Nowhere else in the world, probably, would a frontier be found which cuts off a riverain people artificially from the waterway.

The Peace Treaty (Part III, Section IX (East Prussia), 94, Para. 4), however, invested Poland with the full and unrestricted supervision of the river, including its eastern bank, to such a depth as may be necessary for the regulation and improvement of the waterway.

The Germans take the view that the Treaty was intended to convey only facilities for supervision. The

Poles take the view which was adopted when the Treaty was implemented, that a transfer of sovereign rights was intended. The argument advanced is that sovereignty is necessary for the proper and continuous regulation of the river. A further argument advanced by the Poles, in defence of their title, is that as they possess the rest of the river they should also have the outlet. This view will be seen to lack validity when it is remembered that the Rhine, the national river of Germany, passes through Holland in its lower reaches to the sea.

During the course of the negotiations which preceded the fixing of the frontier the Poles stated that the Vistula was incapable of dealing with the shipping which would be passing along it, and that it would be necessary to build a canal through the Marienwerder plains to relieve it. For this purpose, however, it would have been necessary to allot the whole of the Marienwerder area to Poland, which, as a matter of fact, was included in the Polish claims.

The Polish authorities are not even maintaining the improvements which, at enormous expense, had been carried out by the Prussian State. They have neglected this great commercial waterway. Conservancy works are inadequately carried out. Floods have free play, sand is washed down, protective works are destroyed, the river deteriorates.

The skilful exploitation of the Vistula by Prussian authorities is described in the official *Almanach Polonais* for 1926 as follows :—

“The lower part of the Vistula from the old German Russian frontier to the estuary was improved for the whole of its length of 222 kilometres by the Prussian Government during 1836 to 1900 at a cost of about 113,700,000 marks. In order to protect the plain of Danzig against inundations from the Vistula a new estuary was constructed near Schivenhorst in 1895. The two former branches of the Vistula, namely, the Vistula near Danzig, called the Dead Vistula, and the other—the Nogat and the Elbing Vistula, have been separated by locks so that the waters of the Vistula throw themselves into the sea through a single estuary at Schivenhorst. . . .

“The Nogat arm of the Vistula, canalised in 1915, is joined to the basin of the Oder by the Bromberg Canal, with Königsberg by the Vistula, by the Bay of Frisch, and further along with Memel and the Niemen by the intermediary rivers, Pregel, Deime, Frederick Canal, and the Kurisches Haff.”

These facilities for communication by water have been disrupted by the Corridor.

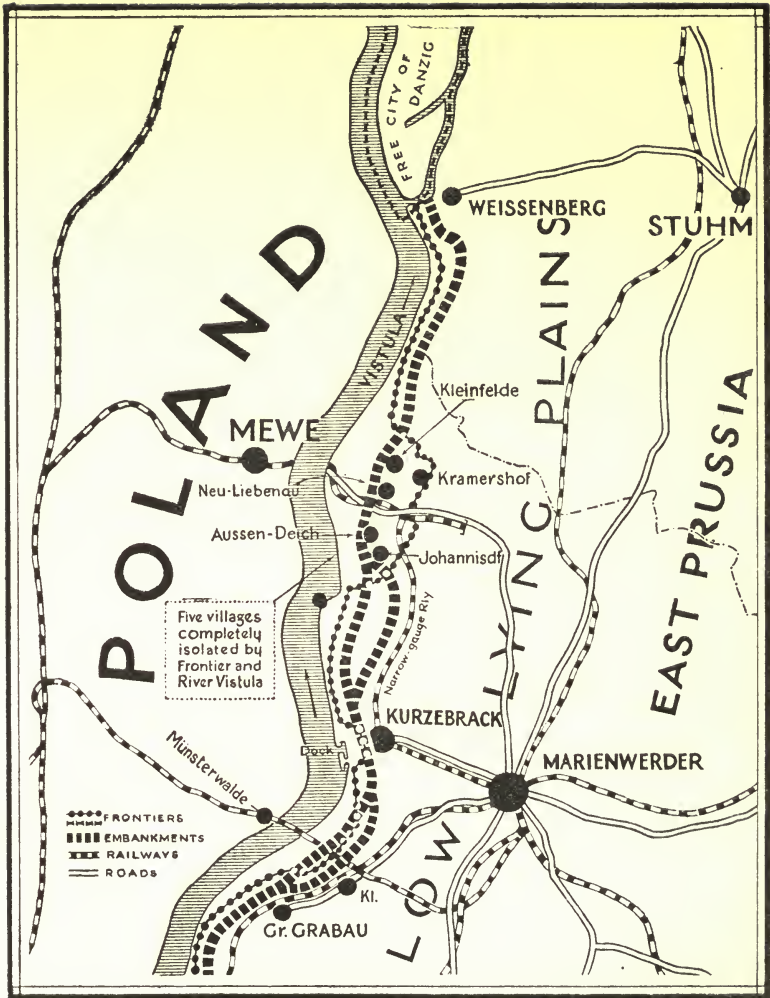
The responsibility for carrying out conservancy work and for maintaining the river in a navigable state belongs, of course, solely to Poland. The failure of the Polish authorities up to now to carry out their duties, while it irritates the Germans, penalises themselves. The mighty Vistula and its tributaries are advantageously situated for serving as inland waterways for traffic. The surface of the country is level, the fall is moderate, the linking of rivers and other waterways is

an easy engineering problem. It is essential, however, that the mean water levels should be maintained and the river bed preserved by the construction of spurs, longitudinal dykes, and other conservancy works. Unfortunately the 500 kilometres of the Vistula formerly in Russia remain in the primitive state in which it was handed over to the Poles. Navigation in the lower or former German section of the river suffers because of the failure to carry out improvements. It is estimated by the Polish authorities that an expenditure of 800,000,000 zloty, spread over thirty years, is necessary to put Polish waterways in an efficient state for navigation.

An independent estimate of the expenditure necessary to improve the Vistula and other waterways in Poland has been prepared by three engineers—an American, a Frenchman, and a Dutchman—and presented to the League of Nations (“The Programme of Development of Navigable Waterways in Poland, the Utilisation of the Maritime Outlets and of the Points of Access thereto for the Coal Traffic”). They estimate that the necessary constructions and conservancy work will cost more than 560,000,000 zloty without including the ground sills. “This is a financial task of a whole generation.” It is pointed out that much preliminary work is necessary before a plan can be prepared. They emphasise the need for constant vigilance and provision for adequate maintenance. The engineers recommend the construction of a coal canal from the coal district to Thorn or Bromberg. “Also that

the exportation of Silesian coal should be effected by improvement of the Vistula." The recommendations in this report bring out the uneconomic phase of transport caused by the Corridor. The aim of Poland is to use only transport facilities within its own borders. The natural outlet to the sea from the Upper Silesian coal fields is via the river Oder, which is 33 per cent. shorter than the Vistula route and is in working order. The report, which is an official document issued by the League of Nations, is accompanied by a map in which the towns in East Prussia have been given Polish names; historic Königsberg, for instance, is disguised as Krolewicz. The official organ of the Polish Ministry of Commerce admits the decline of shipping on the Vistula :—

"The volume of freight carried on the Vistula again, as in the previous year, leaves much to be desired. This cheap and favourable artery for traffic is still not being utilised to the extent that it should be, so that, on the one hand, the railways are being overburdened, while on the other navigation interests are declining. The unfavourable water level is not solely responsible for this. The principal cause will probably be the cheap railway freights for mass goods, to which is added adequate harbour accommodation for this river shipping. Apart from the transitory activity caused by the British coal stoppage, the transport of goods on the Vistula is consistently below the pre-war level."



The Isolation of East Prussia from the River Vistula.

The Segregation of five villages between the frontier and the river.

The Dock at Kurzebrack, where Prussia is supposed to have access to the Vistula (see photograph facing p. 50).

The Danger of Inundation to which the Marienwerder plains are exposed by the allocation of sections of the river embankment to Poland.

The bridge at Munsterwalde which is now being demolished.

The territory on left of map marked Poland is part of the corridor.

VII

THE VISTULA : A SOURCE OF DANGER

TO appreciate better the full significance of the neglect of the Vistula in its lower reaches, and of the inclusion of the east bank in the Corridor, it is necessary to know something of the local topography and the system of conservancy formerly carried out.

On the East Prussian side of the river at a point in the "Circle" of Marienwerder, which at the plebiscite in 1920 voted 92 per cent. for Germany, there is a wide rich expanse of low-lying land. For some periods of the year it is below the level of the water. This land was reclaimed from swamps, which in former years lay in the course of the river before it was restricted to a regular channel. A high embankment protects the land from floods, and an elaborate drainage and irrigation system safeguards cultivation. It looks like a bit of Holland. The comparison is apposite for other reasons than the existence of the Dutch system of irrigation and the dykes and dams. Originally, in the Early Middle Ages, this land was reclaimed and colonised by Dutchmen and Germans from the Low Countries. Along stretches on both banks of the Vistula are found communities of descendants of colonists

who settled in these marsh lands several centuries ago. I found one farmer whose Dutch ancestors went back over 400 years : all had owned and lived on the same farm. Others claimed descent from Dutch ancestors who had emigrated to these inhospitable regions to escape from religious persecution. The original pioneers were joined by kinsmen at later periods, and the colonies thus founded have survived to the present day. Many of these men and women are descendants of the courageous and self-sacrificing sect, the Mennonites. Their family names indicate their racial origin : and while during generations they have lost some of their asceticism, and pacificism is no longer a rigid article in their creed, they still retain their most striking characteristics. They are austere, industrious, thrifty, conscientious. They are excellent farmers. In domestic virtues they stand out as model citizens. After centuries of life here they have not shed their habits or lost their convictions : they have not been completely assimilated. They worship according to their faith—practising a combination of baptism and quakerism. I visited a little chapel of modern construction which serves a Mennonite community on the left bank of the Vistula opposite Culm, and saw other places of worship. As a rule, farmers act as lay ministers or as exhorters.

The Mennonite colonists have impressed their influence on the country and population to an extent far out of proportion to their numbers. Their neighbours follow their methods of cultivation. Perhaps

the Friesian breed of cattle which one sees all over the lower Valley of the Vistula may be traced to stocks imported by the colonists, many of whom came from Friesland. They also brought with them the Dutch style of architecture. The dwelling houses have the characteristic Dutch "stoep" which Dutchmen have attached to the entrance of their homes all over the world—in New York, Cape Town, Java, and Prussia, and in more modern settlements in Canada and the United States.

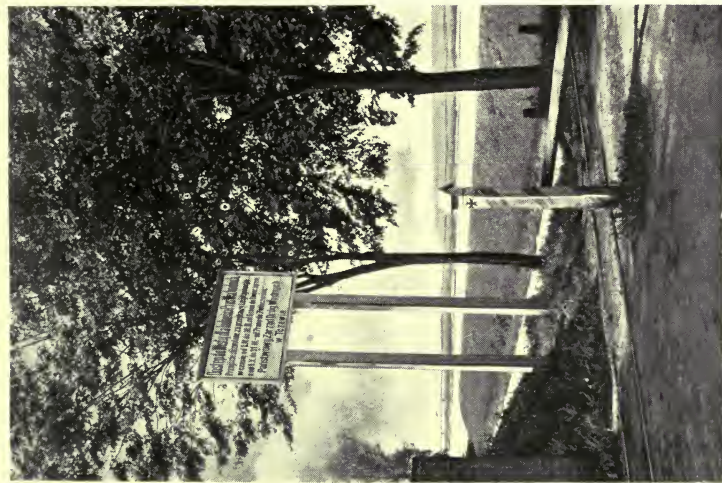
Over the rich, flat lands behind the dykes of the Vistula are to be seen many of these Dutch houses belonging to gentlemen farmers whose estates may run to 1,000 acres or more. The land is exceptionally fertile. It grows fine crops of beet-sugar, wheat, tomatoes, lucerne, and rye, and the meadows yield an abundance of fodder.

To the inhabitants of this district the Vistula is a source of life and a source of danger. There is a local Dyke Administration in West Prussia consisting of engineers and experts whose functions are to embank the Vistula and protect the low-lying lands from floods. To preserve navigation and to protect the farms, the Vistula must be kept rigidly to its fixed channel. In the past the dykes and a system of horizontal spurs thrown out at frequent intervals into the river have protected the banks from erosion. These spurs or groins, constructed of stones and bricks and fascines, are now being eaten away. No means is taken to protect or strengthen them. Inevitably navigation has

suffered. The river, no longer compressed by intact groins, cannot keep the necessary depth for larger vessels. As there is no proper dredging, sandbanks are numerous. The draught of the vessels had to be lowered considerably. Owing to greater risks traffic on the Vistula is steadily decreasing.

The danger of inundations at this particular point is accentuated by what is happening on the opposite bank of the Vistula. The Polish authorities have utilised the former flat land over which the Vistula was permitted to spread its waters in times of flood, for growing willows, contrary to the sound policy of the former German engineers. The result is that large deposits of silt and sand are gradually retained, driving the flood water with greater force to the East Prussian side, disturbing the existing navigation channel, and threatening the dykes with destruction. The industrious population of this flat country, containing about seventy villages, live in fear of being flooded out and their property destroyed. The present pumping arrangements in the Marienwerder district are quite inadequate to deal with exceptional floods, and in any case nothing can save the district if the dykes burst.

Formerly the river was watched closely at this point to protect the interests of the lower reaches near Dirschau, Marienburg, and territory which is now incorporated in the Free City of Danzig. A Government which does not possess the lowlands on the right bank of the Vistula has not the same interest in recording the movements of the water.



KURZEBRACK: EAST PRUSSIANS GRANTED ACCESS TO VISTULA HERE; NOTICE SAYS PERMIT TO CROSS RIVER MUST BE OBTAINED AT DIRSCHAU



ALLENSTEIN: CASTLE OF TEUTONIC KNIGHTS, COMBINING FORTRESS AND CHURCH, WITH MODERN VIADUCT

At this same spot opposite the town of Marienwerder, there was formerly a regular highway between Eastern and Western Prussia. A light railway serving the district leads up to the banks of the river. It is no longer used. It is overgrown with grass. There is no ferry for goods. Communication, however, is still possible. Residents within 10 kilometres of each side of the river have the privilege of crossing on a permit without the usual passport. At the dead-end of the disused railway, which lies just within Polish territory, a notice (in Polish) is exhibited, which informs residents that they may have the privilege of crossing the river on obtaining a permit from the Polish authorities at Tczew. An armed Polish guard stands on duty here and looked menacingly at me as I copied the notice. The Polish town of Tczew, the former German Dirschau, is more than 20 kilometres distant. The business of the applicant seeking to cross must not be urgent and he must possess the means to travel to Tczew and back for the permit.

The most remarkable thing, however, is that this point is not only supposed to satisfy the needs of the surrounding riverain country or the Marienwerder plains, but also forms the sole access to the Vistula of the East Prussian population. The makers of the Peace Treaty had no intention of cutting a population of $2\frac{1}{2}$ million persons off entirely from this great waterway, and they therefore laid down in Para. 5 of Article 97:—

“The Principal Allied and Associated Powers will at the same time draw up regulations for assuring to

the population of East Prussia to the fullest extent and under equitable conditions access to the Vistula and the use of it for themselves, their commerce, and their boats.”

Those who implemented this clause, however, were not animated by the same spirit. The access to the Vistula which has been provided for $2\frac{1}{2}$ million inhabitants and for the economic needs of a territory covering 37,000 square kilometres is only four yards wide, and it may only be used on production of a special permit, to obtain which, as already mentioned, the applicant has to travel to Dirschau.

Münsterwalde Bridge, so called from the village of the same name on the West bank of the Vistula, crosses the Vistula near Kurzebrack, and provides the sole means of communication between Poland and East Prussia. It is pre-eminently placed and constructed to serve the needs of economic and personal communication between the two populations. It was built between 1906 and 1909 at a cost of 9 million marks, and crossed the river in five arches, with a total length of 1,058 metres. It was one of the largest bridges in Europe, and carried a railway line, a double road, and footways. Under the Peace Treaty the bridge, together with a strip of land several hundred metres wide on the east bank of the river, was ceded to Poland as a bridge-head. It was at once closed to railway traffic and has since been available only for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. It is the only bridge between Graudenz and Dirschau, a distance of 120 kilometres, and

is thus the only bridge across the Vistula between East Prussia and Poland. The traffic across it has, therefore, been very considerable, the only other means of crossing the river being ferries at Gr. Nebrau and Kurzebrack. Between January 1st and June 30th, 1927, it was used by 6,976 persons, 2,437 motor-cars and horse-drawn vehicles, and 1,142 bicycles.

On April 24th, 1928, demolition operations were commenced, and on July 1st, 1928, the bridge was closed to traffic. The bridge was the only route between the southern part of East Prussia and the rest of Germany over a distance of 120 kilometres, and for local intercourse it saved a detour of as much as 75 kilometres.

There is a contractual obligation on Poland to maintain this bridge under the terms of the German-Polish agreement of December 2nd, 1925, with regard to customs and other routes across the frontier. This agreement specified the customs route from Kl. Grabau to Opalenie (Münsterwalde), which crosses the Münsterwalde bridge. The Polish reply to German protests was that a ferry would be established and that during floods and the break-up of the ice steamers would be used. Experience has shown that communication by ferry is impossible on as many as seventy days in the year during the periods named.

The question of bridge-head remains. Once the bridge has been destroyed there is no further need of a military bridge-head for its protection, so that a

frontier revision at this point, to secure uniformity along the river, seems a logical consequence.

To add to the curiosities of Corridor relationships, a house on the Prussian side of the river at the spot to which I have referred has been allotted to Poland for the accommodation of the guards who watch over this strategic position, but the garden remains in Prussia.

Proceeding further down the river I came to another of these territorial adjustments dictated by strategic considerations.

Here the Peace Treaty gives Poland a bridge-head which takes in and isolates five villages with a population of 700. There is no bridge, but there is a reason for the bridge-head ; it has a traditional attraction for a great military nation. The Teutonic Knights blazed a trail here on their crusade to convert the Pagan Prussian tribes of the East, and Napoleon's troops marched this way to the conquest of Russia. The situation is not a happy one for the now isolated farmers : they are cut off sometimes from supplies and have to accept aid from their—former—compatriots, as help across the river from their new-found nationals in times of floods and drifting of ice is not obtainable. The District of Marienwerder is the loser ; it has had to make new roads and new parochial rearrangements outside the bridge-head.

Boundaries become closer where the estuary of the Vistula begins. Three States meet at one point ; Prussia, Poland, and the Free City of Danzig.

Movements are restricted by permits and passports. At Weissenberg a channel—the Nogat—relieves the Vistula of a volume of water, which is regulated by lock. The ancient city of Marienburg, founded about 100 years before Warsaw, with its castle and fort, for over a century the headquarters of the Teutonic Knights, had overflowed to the other side of the Nogat, and a suburban population of over 2,000 has been transferred to the Free City of Danzig. The greater portion of the Kreis or County of Marienburg—an area of 30,000 hectares, consisting of the richest sugar-beet growing lands on the Baltic—has also been handed over to build up the New State. The loss of this territory has upset the county administration, adding to expense and lessening income, besides interrupting means of communication. Poland still keeps the Vistula until it passes the border town of Dirschau—Tczew—and then, although its sovereignty stops, its authority does not end, as it shares with Danzig control of the Port.

While Prussia was denied the least share of the Vistula it is more fortunate in the case of the Nogat as the boundary runs down the middle of that waterway for several miles. Emasculated Marienburg has been, however, penalised. Before the war the city had planned to generate electricity at the locks on the Nogat. A power house was erected, but the seven feet of water which tumbles over the lock is no longer available as the frontier runs down the middle of the fall without any visible dividing line. Electric power

has now to be obtained at three times the cost from a distance of 150 kilometres. These territorial adjustments were not drawn up with any regard for human feelings or economic considerations, or geographical convenience.

The chief mistake has been in failing to bring the Vistula within the regime applied by the Peace Treaty to other inland waterways, and in depriving Germany of the rights of a riparian State. Granting sovereignty in the Vistula to Poland without international responsibility destroys the economic advantage which the Vistula should possess. Either Poland has been given too much or too little territory. Without co-operation with East Prussia it cannot efficiently conserve and embank this river and with co-operation its exclusive sovereignty would go. The problem is not one which solely concerns Poland and Germany. Inland water transport affects shipping and interests of all nations. The Transport Committee of the League of Nations makes inquiries in pursuance of the resolutions of the Genoa Conference of 1921, but the Vistula is outside the category of navigable waterways regulated by the Barcelona Convention, and is not brought within international regulation by the Minorities Treaty. The river does more than separate the Corridor from East Prussia ; it cuts off intercourse : it is a barrier and a menace.

VIII

FROM POZNAN (POSEN) TO TORUN (THORN)

PPOSEN was the most Polish town in pre-war Europe. Outwardly it was a well-built German town, an important market centre with substantial shops and commercial buildings. The Poles have carried out many civic improvements and extended the city boundaries. A new park is named after President Wilson, one of the founders of the New Poland. Under the Prussian and German Governments, who endowed Posen with magnificent educational institutions, including a stately university, preference was given to the German language in the schools and colleges. This policy did not succeed in abolishing Polish, which remained the language of the people. Now the Poles, who are in authority, are adopting a similar policy to that of their predecessors, and without more success. The German language is taught to a minimum extent in elementary schools, though more liberally in the higher schools. While the German language is used, it is Polish history and Polish culture which is taught or imposed on the students. Poles recognise the need for bilingualism in a frontier town. German is the language of commerce. German banks

have branches in Posen, and one has no difficulty in carrying on conversations with the usual people whom one encounters in shops, hotels, banks, and commercial houses. Although few in number, the Germans are an influential minority. They have their political parties in line with the same parties in Germany and newspapers in German are published, but are subject to censorship and on occasions to suppression.

The province of Posen, or Poznan, is a flat, uninteresting land, almost purely agricultural. The fields are large ; there are no fences or hedges, and few trees. My visit synchronised with the beetroot and potato harvests. The work was being done almost entirely by women, many of them, I was told, season workers from other parts of Poland. Some of them were housed in shacks in the fields. Many of them were bare-footed and wore brilliantly coloured shawls and head-dresses. They work in groups and are paid by results.

The only relief from the level prairie was the villages, a few big houses, and an occasional factory. There is no difficulty in identifying the German settlements, or villages, from the Polish. The heavy and better land was formerly in the possession of Germans. Their villages are well built of stone and brick. Polish villages contain more wooden buildings and are of a much more modest description.

The German settlements and population are rapidly diminishing. The people have either returned voluntarily to the fatherland, or their properties have been

compulsorily liquidated. The large owners of land and factories who were settled in the province prior to 1908 had the option to embrace Polish citizenship. A number of the big landowners, farmers, and pig-breeders, and the owners of engineering works and sugar refineries have done so. In the case of companies they have been obliged to accept the partnership of Polish directors.

The farms, works, and the factories owned by Germans are oases of efficiency in the plains, and must cause some jealousy to the Poles, who are excellent industrious farmers, but did not start with the same natural advantages or enjoy the same privileges. The German system of co-operation is in force. At Janowice, for example, is a wholesale co-operative society with 400 members. It supplies everything the farmers require, from a threshing machine to a screw. It owns an hotel, flour mills, a concert hall and theatre, in which the German cultural spirit is fostered.

There is a pig and milk pool in another district near Posen, in which Poles participate, although not accepted as members. The German-Polish citizens are doing well in a material sense, but are not reconciled to their isolation from their kinsmen. They were outnumbered by Poles before, but were members of the dominating caste. Now they are the bottom dogs and the Polish officials are inclined to be domineering and differential in regard to taxation.

The towns in the Province generally contained a large percentage of Germans, but not until the German

“bridge” over the Corridor is reached did they outnumber the Poles. The towns of Gnesen and Znin were largely German, and the important towns of Bromberg and Thorn were inhabited by indisputably German populations. Now in all these towns the proportion of the populations is reversed. The former German fortified towns of Culm and Graudenz on the eastern limits of the Corridor have been altogether de-germanised. The magnificent barracks and forts built by Germany as part of the eastern defences are now occupied by Polish forces. A headquarters of the Polish air force is at Thorn and all over this frontier region the Polish squadrons of Polish airmen demonstrate their menacing efficiency over the disarmed Germans of East Prussia. Western Poland’s frontier is now within easy striking distance of Berlin, only 200 miles away. Militarism rears its head all over Poland : soldiers in every town ; sentinels by the frontiers ; armed men at the customs stations ; gendarmes patrol country roads, and policemen in the towns carry an arsenal of arms.

IX

THE PLEBISCITES

(a) MARIENWERDER

THE district of Marienwerder is now the most westerly part of East Prussia bordering on the Corridor and the Free City of Danzig. It was claimed for Poland on historical and ethnological grounds, and also for economic reasons, as the direct railway from Warsaw to Dirschau and Danzig passes through the territory. The character of the population on both banks of the Vistula in this district was the same, but only the inhabitants on the right bank were given the chance of expressing their political sympathies. It was assumed that the area contained a considerable number of Poles. Polish-speaking people had immigrated into these territories as far back as the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, synchronising with the coming of less numerous German colonists from the West. The heathen Prussians, who migrated from the East, were conquered and converted by the Teutonic Order in the course of the thirteenth century. Many of them perished in their fight against the Christian Crusaders, and the gaps in the population not filled by

German colonists were occupied by Poles drafted into the territory by the Teutonic Knights. The greater number of these Polish immigrants settled in the county of Stuhm, where they formed a nucleus of Polish-speaking people and remained unassimilated by the surrounding Germans. The area on the right bank of the Vistula, where the plebiscite was held, formed an economic and historic whole with the remainder of the province of West Prussia, including part of the territory now known as the Corridor.

Prussian statistical records curiously enough exaggerated the number of Polish residents in the district. The climate of historic Prussia was not attractive to western officials who, since 1900, were compelled to take their turn in serving in these parts. In order to add to the attraction of the eastern marches for western officials, the Prussian State paid an extra allowance to officials employed in a community which was considered to be Polish speaking, with the object of stimulating their interest in the Polish problem, or, what is more probable, to compensate them for having to live in an inhospitable region amidst an alien and unsympathetic people. The tendency was for every official in the East to exaggerate the number of Poles in his district in order to draw the extra remuneration. Where there was a shortage of Poles, German citizens were, statistically, drawn upon in order to add to the Polish danger, and to safeguard the territorial allowance. Accordingly the German statistics published before the



MARIENWERDER CASTLE: CHURCH-FORTRESS OF
TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

war seemed to give support to the claims made by the Poles. The plebiscite was an unexpected corrective.

The total population of the voting district, according to the official statistics for 1910, was 160,567 people, of whom 15 per cent. or 24,126 were considered as Polish speaking. The figures in the county, or Kreis, of Stuhm, with a total population of 36,527 in 1910, of which 15,571, or 42 per cent., according to Polish statistics, were Poles, were significant. Over 80 per cent. of the votes were in favour of Germany, leaving a Polish percentage of 19.07.

The plebiscite was carried out under the supervision of an Inter-Allied Commission, during a period when conditions in both Germany and Poland were bordering on chaos.

It was the claim of the Germans that the population in the Marienwerder area and on the opposite bank of the Vistula were identical in race and sympathy, with a common history, religion, and economic interests. Had "self-determination" been put in force on the other side of the river the inhabitants were convinced that the voting would have been similar—preponderantly German. The economic and industrial interests are closely knit into one unit in this corner of West Prussia. The identity of interests and the loss from the partition are intensified in the neighbourhood of the historic town of Marienburg, lower down the river, which is dealt with in a separate chapter.

(b) THE ALLENSTEIN PLEBISCITE

WHILE the Corridor has its Cashubes, East Prussia, as I have already indicated, has its Masures. They are also Slavs, and they also speak a Polish dialect or a dialect related to Polish, but unlike the Cashubes they are Protestants. They are the descendants of settlers who immigrated between the 14th and 17th centuries. The main settlement will probably have taken place in the second half of the 15th century, after the country had been depopulated by war and plague. In the early years of the eighteenth century German colonists appeared as the forerunners of larger forces so that by 1816 the Poles in the whole of East Prussia were reduced to 23,000, while the Masures numbered 172,000 out of a total population of 886,000. The Masures increased slowly or were germanised or polonised. A century later according to the German census of 1910 they numbered 182,300. The Masures are differentiated in statistics, not by race, but by the language they speak and the religion they profess. If they are bilingual and Protestant, they are put down as Masures. Their colloquial speech has become a mixture of German and Polish, and their native literature consists chiefly of religious works. For many years before the war the Poles carried on propaganda among the Masures : they were less successful than in their efforts with the Cashubes because of differences in religion. Nevertheless, the Poles claimed them as fellow-nationals and demanded the incorporation of their country into the

New Poland ; and not only Masuria, but the whole province of Allenstein. No plebiscite was necessary to determine the fate of the area as the inhabitants were "indisputably Polish." Mr. Lloyd George disputed the contention.

At the Peace Conference the German representatives also opposed the holding of a plebiscite in the district for the opposite reason that Allenstein was not inhabited by an indisputably Polish people, and therefore a plebiscite was unnecessary. They were criticised for their inconsistency. Allenstein, as defined by the Peace Conference, had an area of 12,000 square kilometres, and a population of 550,000. Mr. Harold Temperley, in the "History of the Peace Conference," observed "that of these slightly more than half are Polish in race and language, though the Germans call them Masurians and lay stress on the divergence of the local dialect from pure Polish speech. On the other hand, this area has been under the domination of East Prussian Germans, and as a result the Poles as well as the Germans are Protestants."

At the plebiscite, held on July 11th, 1920, 363,209 votes were given in favour of union with East Prussia, and 7,980 for union with Poland. The Germans said that if East Prussia was separated from Germany it was "bound to be reduced to poverty and ultimately fall to Poland. Germany could never allow this to take place."

Alenstein, the principal city, the headquarters of the provincial administration, and the seat of a large

garrison, has a fine castle, built by the Teutonic Knights, but has been inconspicuous in history. It is noted for its idyllic setting of well wooded and well-watered country, and its great diversity of landscape form. The deep and narrow glen of the Alle, which seems to encroach on the town itself, provides delightful walks through deep woods, while but a few miles farther afield are picturesque lakes, forest-encompassed and dotted with romantic islands.

The other towns in the province are Ortelsburg, Lötzen, Osterode, Sensburg, Lyck, Johannisburg, and Neidenburg. The best known place in the area is Tannenberg, the scene of the historic battle of 1410, when the Teutonic Knights were routed by the Poles and their Allies—an event which heralded the end of a regime. It was also the centre of Hindenburg's smashing defeat of the Russian army in 1914, when two Army Corps were wiped out or imprisoned, a disaster which shook Russian prestige and began movements which led to the overthrow of the Empire.

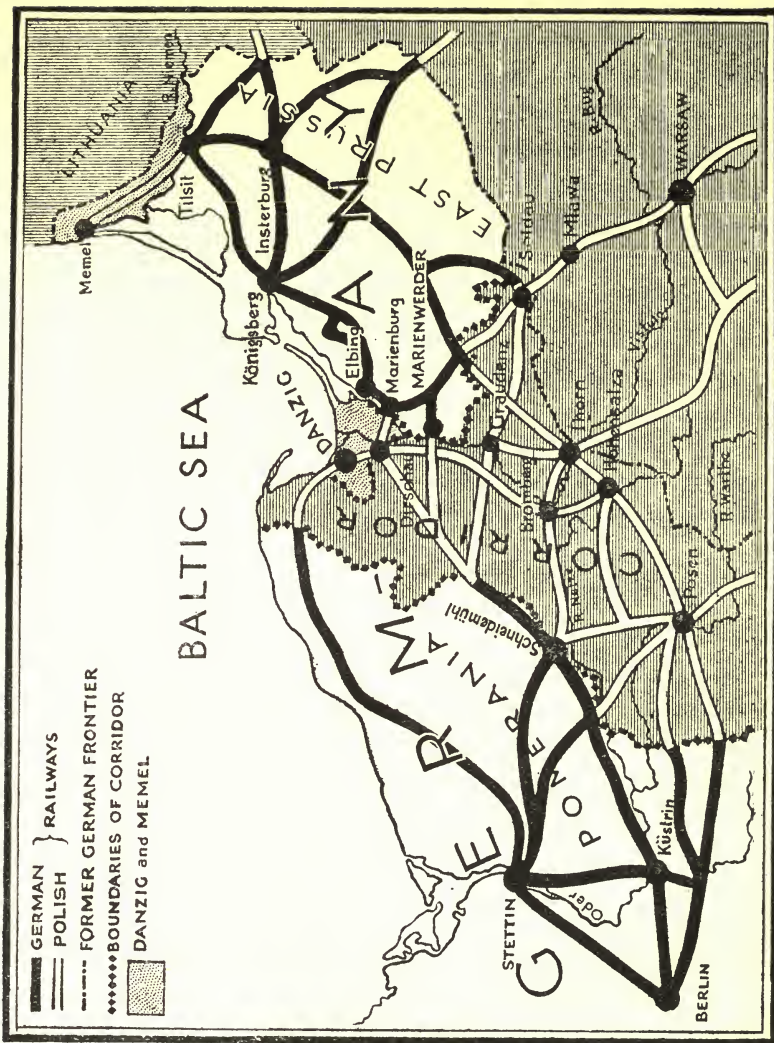
The chief centre of Hindenburg's battles was the Masurian lakes and forests. He manœuvred the enemy into a situation which made their annihilation inevitable. The area was the one part of Germany which suffered devastation during the war. The towns inhabited by Masures were the chief victims. The advance of the Russians into Allenstein was accompanied by the ruthless destruction of houses and property, outrages and massacres. The town of Osterode was wrecked by shell-fire and then burned; the town has been

reconstructed, but from the lack of style in the buildings, I think hurriedly. I visited Osterode on market day. Masures were selling their fruit, vegetables, poultry, eggs, sheep, and pigs. They are Slav types, all speak German as well as Polish, and profess to be perfectly satisfied with their lot.

The horrors committed by the Russians, I was told, included the imprisonment of residents in their houses, which were then set on fire. The German army had, perforce, while driving out the Russians, to add to the destruction of property.

The Masure country is the most beautiful part of East Prussia. It reminds one of Finland because of its numerous lakes and forests. One scene of surpassing beauty succeeds another. It should attract tourists who want to hunt and fish in an unexploited country. Motorists have no difficulty in getting about and there are good hotels in the towns. The winters are long and severe. Potatoes, sugar beet, barley, and rye are the chief crops, and lumbering and saw milling are the leading local industries.

The Poles carry on an active propaganda in Allenstein and issue Polish newspapers. Polish is taught in schools in Masuria where the parents of the children demand it. The national character and the political sympathies of these people depend, apart from their religion, which is that of the majority of the inhabitants of East Prussia, on economic interests and cultural attainments, which are German.



Map showing railway communication from East to West cut by Corridor.

X

EAST PRUSSIA: THE CRADLE OF THE PRUSSIAN PEOPLE

ON the map of Europe which the English representatives used at the Peace Conference, Prussia is marked as a country with Memel as its most easterly extremity and stretching westward to include the province of West Prussia. The Corridor was driven through West Prussia—leaving the Province of East Prussia isolated from the mainland of Germany and cut off from free unrestricted communication with the capital. West Prussia also lost its chief port—Danzig, with adjoining territory; East Prussia lost its outpost Memel, with an adjacent area inhabited by three times the population of the town. Thus the Provinces were deprived of two outlets to the sea towards which lines of communication converged. Another excision was made at Soldau, at a vital point where four railways meet. Soldau was inhabited by a large German population. There was no plebiscite. It was given to Poland.

The two provinces, before the partition, covered a total area of approximately 25,000 square miles,

with a population of nearly four millions. West Prussia as a geographical entity has disappeared. The residue left after the partition—1,100 square miles—was added to East Prussia.

Every cut into German territory, involving mutilation, provoked bitter and everlasting resentment, but no area could have been chosen where the wound would have rankled and spread infection deeper than West Prussia. East Prussia, which is now isolated, is attached to Germany by many binding, indissoluble ties. Historically, it was the nucleus of Greater Prussia, which ultimately dominated the Empire, and politically formed a unit stretching from Memel to the borders of Belgium—a state with a population exceeding that of Great Britain. East Prussia might thus claim to be the cradle of modern Germany.

The original inhabitants whether aborigines or immigrants, were of mixed racial origin. They were a turbulent, savage, fighting people, and it took many centuries before they were moulded into one more or less homogeneous race. The country was first known in European history for its amber, a rare treasure, much prized in ancient times, and only found in one or two parts of the world. The ancient overland trade routes for amber connected the district, of which Königsberg is now the centre, with the Mediterranean. The other chief products of Old Prussia were timber and the harvest of the hunter.

It is claimed that East Prussia originated the German conception of the modern state. The origin is traced

to the Teutonic Knights, whose administration was based upon a conception of public welfare, unique in the age when it was applied, and enforced. The Knights were the disinterested guardians of functions which were regarded as establishing a state. Their idea of public order and draconic administration was handed down from the last of the Knights after the Reformation to the Brandenburg Hohenzollerns—a system which was gradually transformed into modern bureaucracy. The system was consolidated in East Prussia, while the rest of Germany had not reached the same disciplinary stage. A German commentator puts the case and its bearing on partition in this way :—

“Progress and prosperity have from time immemorial been bound up with an efficient administration. Political and national life in these territories cannot be severed from an efficient administration. The development of western democracy is quite different. The nation represents the state, which is not conceived as a kind of superstructure. The state has never been separated from the nation. In East Prussia, however, the bureaucracy or administration was, so to say, a self-contained entity which absorbed not only all public functions, but public responsibility too. Elsewhere bureaucracy rests upon the foundation of the masses of the people, whereas in East Prussia the mass of the people depended upon bureaucracy. It would be a mistake to say that this state of affairs proves the artificial

character of the present order of things. What ought to be quite clear is this : namely, that the present administrative and political equilibrium in East Prussia cannot be altered without destroying the life of the province. The cession of the province of West Prussia to Poland has resulted in hundreds of thousands of people emigrating, not because all of them were threatened by actual Polish oppression, but because the mere fact of the bureaucracy that they were used to being destroyed overwhelmed them with such a sense of insecurity that they left. The sudden disappearance of the Prussian administration created a situation which might perhaps be compared to a sudden removal of parliamentary government in England. As it is quite unthinkable that the English nation could live without its parliamentary machinery, it is equally unthinkable that the people who have created what we have described as the modern bureaucracy could feel security without it. For the Eastern bureaucracy represented something like a Magna Charta of public justice and public freedom, quite contrary to the average conception. It was not oppression, but service that was offered to the community. The absence of this public service alters the circumstances of daily life to such a degree that people refuse to put up with it."

This point of view is strange to English-speaking democracies, who look to popularly-elected assemblies as the source of power and the machinery to curb

bureaucracy, whose growth is regarded with jealousy and distrust.

The Prussian State has been built upon other lines, and mechanised order was accepted without demur. The sudden withdrawal of efficient administrative order leads to discontent. It did so on the transfer of administration in Alsace, where the precision of the German machine gave place to a loosely-organised French administration. It was a hundred times worse when Poles—untrained, unscientific, and with a crude conception of public service—took over from the Germans in the Corridor, and along the eastern marches. The partition not only displaced an efficient system for an experimental one in the annexed territories, but interfered with the smooth working of the Prussian organism in the severed and adjoining territories.

The partition of East and West Prussia, which had for centuries been one trading community, cut main routes which had been in existence before the Hanseatic League made the Teutons of the Baltic the foremost merchant adventurers of the time, dominating the commercial world. Mrs. J. R. Green, in her "Town Life of the Fifteenth Century," a recognised authority on the period, lays stress on the strength of the Hanseatic League, combined with the Teutonic Order. "Dinant," she observes, "was the only town outside German-speaking countries, which belonged to the League, and the League was so powerful that it forced the English traders in the North Sea to bow to

its policy and fight at its bidding." According to Mrs. Green :—

“The English traders fought their way against the powerful vested interests of the Teutonic Knights and the League, and succeeded in selling their cloth in Danzig and Elbing. In 1533 English traders negotiated a treaty of commerce at Marienburg with the ‘general master of the house of S. Mary of Teutonia.’ A tariff war existed in these days, England imposing heavy duties on German imports, while the Germans forbade traffic in English cloth. After the peace of Marienburg, English colonies flourished in Danzig and Elbing, in spite of the opposition of the local merchants and the jealousy of the Teutonic Order. The Teutonic Order favoured Netherland manufacturers in the fifteenth century, and formed a connection with Dinant so that the Netherland influence penetrated the Baltic, not only from the colonies forming the population, but also through the trading community.”

It is important to remember these old associations, as the modern Prussia is shaped on the early history of the province. Though Danzig and Elbing were the two ports which drew most of the timber trade for export, there were main routes from East to West across the Vistula.¹ These main lines of communication have now been interrupted for the first time in history.

East Prussia was always dependent on the rest of Germany. It could not thrive without uninterrupted

¹ Napoleon used one of these routes in his march to Russia.

communication with West Prussia, Upper Silesia, the Ruhr, and Rhineland. There was a natural interchange of commodities in pre-war days, and two-thirds of the traffic was carried by rail and one-third by sea. East Prussia has now lost its chief markets. It cannot serve Upper Silesia or other territory annexed to Poland, and its routes to the rest of Germany pass through Polish territory.

The province is mainly agricultural. It was a granary for the industrial districts of Germany. Its crops consist chiefly of rye, barley, potatoes, sugar-beet, oats, and wheat. Sixty-one per cent. of the inhabitants live on the land, which has a greater area under cultivation than any other province in Prussia.

An extensive trade was done with Western Germany in live stock, including pedigree stock. This source of wealth has been seriously curtailed. The loss of its markets in Posen and West Prussia is a serious factor in the economic life of East Prussia. Before the war, 191,000 head of cattle were exported to these provinces per annum; the export has now dropped to 1,700. The industrial products which were exchanged between East Prussia and the territories which have been alienated to Poland reached an annual total of 220,000 tons; the corresponding figure is now only 17,000 tons. The chief manufacturing industries in the province—sugar manufacture, distilling, and saw-milling—have all suffered because of the interruption of their markets. The saw-milling industry, the most

important industry in the province, has suffered with exceptional severity.

The chief towns in the province are Königsberg and Elbing. Königsberg was formerly the headquarters of the Empire's defence force on the Baltic. It was, and is, a university town with traditions of scholarship and philosophy as befits the birthplace of Kant. It is the headquarters of the governmental district of Königsberg, has a population of nearly 300,000, and keeps its official status, though much diminished in importance. Its port no longer flourishes. Its magnificent set of warehouses, with modern equipment, are generally empty. On the occasion of my visit, the only goods in the warehouses were a small consignment of lentils. Königsberg was formerly the world's greatest market in lentils and peas. A certain volume of timber trade exists, including pit props for German mines, but the saw-mill industry is depressed. In 1926 and 1927 the port shared in the boom of Polish coal, but general trade has been slack. Local industries count for little except the pulp and paper works which belong to an English company—the only sign of industrial activity in the town.

Königsberg is deprived of its former flourishing trade with Russia, and is also hit by the "State of War," which exists between Lithuania and Poland. There is a sentimental attachment on the part of Prussians to Königsberg, as here it was that their early kings were crowned. The late Kaiser was a patron of East Prussia. He had a small estate near Frauenburg to

which he frequently retreated, living the life of a country squire or Junker, free from the imposing magnificence of the Imperial Court.

The historic city of Elbing, on the main line between Marienburg and Königsberg was formerly a busy seaport and shipbuilding centre. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Elbing had close associations with London. Several English families played an important part in the trade of the city and monuments to their memory are found in the church of St. Mary, and in the churchyard. Elbing has lost its former hinterland, completely cut off by the Free City of Danzig and the Corridor.

Elbing, like Danzig, is a picturesque town of gable-fronts. It is a blend of bizarre mediævalism and modern industry, but its mediæval atmosphere has been carefully preserved, its newer buildings having been harmonised with the existing trend of architectural style. It is pleasantly diversified by foliage and green spaces, and is laid beautifully between the shores of the Frisches Haff, a great lagoon, and the wooded hills of the Baltic Ridge, with their deep glens and murmuring streams.

It was founded in 1237 by the Teutonic Order and burgesses of Lübeck. The circumstances of its founding are shown in the city arms, which bear the cross of the Knights, the colours of Lübeck, and a fishing-net. It rose to great prosperity under the Order, and became an important member of the Hanseatic League, but was later overshadowed in its development by the still

greater Danzig. Under Poland, Elbing fell into decay, much of its trade being lost to Danzig and Königsberg. Both of these ports had immediate access to the open sea, whereas Elbing was imprisoned by the Frisches Haff, so that its shipping was obliged to seek the Baltic through the narrow opening at Pillau, which together with the right to levy dues, was in the hands of the the Electors of Brandenburg.

Under Prussia, a considerable shipbuilding industry grew up, and the city took on a predominantly industrial character. Some of the greatest German pre-war ocean liners were built at Elbing, including the "Deutschland" which was one of the fastest Atlantic greyhounds. In consequence of the territorial rearrangements the shipbuilding industry has suffered a set-back. The German and Prussian Governments have subsidised this industry, with a view to re-establishing it, and the Reichstag will shortly be asked to sanction further expenditure for this purpose.

Unlike Danzig, Elbing is unable to derive any advantage from transit trade, so that its economic position is desperate.

There are few other towns of importance in the province. Scattered throughout the area are Johannisburg, Lötzen, Lyck, Neidenburg, Ortelsburg, Osterode, Rössel, and Sensburg, each with between 50,000 and 75,000 inhabitants: they have only local significance.

The winters are long in East Prussia: the climate severe. Crops must be sown, grown, and reaped

within five months. Agriculture runs greater hazards here than in more clement lands. It is a picturesque country, but not rich. I have already likened Masuria to Finland. The whole country is a land of lakes, forests, moors and large farmlands. There are hundreds of lakes of all sizes and shapes. Many take the form of serpentine-like waterways which intersect and connect. In summer regular services of steamers are run for distances of over forty miles. There are numerous rivers and running waterways. This interspersion of lakes and ponds with marshlands and dense forests makes communication by road difficult. The Masurian marshes and the historic Tannenberg are within the borders of the Allenstein district. During the war, as I have briefly stated, Allenstein was overrun by the Russians who ravaged the country and left Germany's devastated area behind. The Russian "steam-roller" rolled as far west as Osterode, which was deliberately burned. Bombs were placed in houses, sometimes before the inhabitants had time to escape. The Russian commanders paid for their venturesome adventure: their army was overwhelmed by Hindenburg in the Masurian marshes and forests round Tannenberg, a few miles south of Osterode. Nothing in the war equalled this battle for the success of the strategy employed, or the numbers killed or prisoners taken. The name of Tannenberg was again added to military history for it was in the same neighbourhood six centuries previously that the Poles, with the help of the Prussians of the time, defeated the Teutonic Knights—

a small affair compared with the Hindenburg battle, but a decisive event in history.

Hindenburg afterwards made his headquarters at Lötzen, a considerable town standing on the borders of two of the biggest lakes, and a junction of several railways. He remained in East Prussia until the Russian menace passed.

East Prussia is the home of the German die-hards—the Junkers who own the big estates and formerly lived like feudal lords. They were excellent farmers, worked their estates at low cost and sold their produce in part to Germany west of the Elbe. The isolation of East Prussia has hit these territorial magnates worse than any other section of the community. An investigation, undertaken in 1928 by the Preussen-Kasse organisation, revealed a deplorable situation. The Junker lords have mortgaged their estates, they are unable to buy agricultural machinery, and, while the collection of taxes has been postponed and Government help granted, the Preussen-Kasse comes to the conclusion that by the end of the next agricultural year, three-fourths of the estates in this part of Germany will be faced with bankruptcy. The province is not predominantly latifundian: 25 per cent. of the land belongs to small owners, and 43 per cent. to farms of from 20 to 200 hectares.

The principal difficulty of East Prussian agriculture is that of credit. German banks are unwilling to lend at interest rates which East Prussian agriculture can afford to pay. The service of the short term debt costs

more than that of the former capital debt of 750 million marks. Money borrowed cannot be applied to productive objects, as it is required to meet an already existing deficit. The position is further aggravated by the problem of freights. To ameliorate the position, special freights for cattle, iron and steel have been granted to East Prussia; new railway lines have been laid down, and an air service has been subsidised. In addition to this, new ships ply between Pillau and Swinemünde. Efforts to revive shipping on the canal system through the Corridor, however, have failed, and even the measures which have been taken have not substantially relieved the position. It is suggested that the Government will have to acquire the estates and break them up—a transaction which requires capital which cannot easily be found. The small peasant farmers, who till their own land, have not suffered as they neither require capital nor labour.

The isolation of the province deprives it of its former cheap freights and of its sources of supply in the mainland. In 1913 the traffic between East Prussia and the rest of Germany was 632,116 tons by sea, compared with 2,377,524 by rail—a proof that there was a freightage advantage as well as speed by rail. Traffic by rail is now slower and the freights higher. Agriculture is heavily penalised by the excessive cost of raw material, machinery, fertilisers, and fodder. The imports of fodder, which are the basis of the cattle-rearing industry, came from Russia and formed a very considerable proportion of that country's exports to

East Prussia. The interposition of the Baltic States has now heavily handicapped the importation of these essential products. Wages, which in pre-war days were extremely low, have risen, owing to heavy taxation and the lack of mobility of labour.

While the chief market for the agricultural products of East Prussia was in the territory of Posen and West Prussia—especially the Corridor, which has been lost to Poland—there was also considerable trade between the province and Upper Silesia, which cannot feed itself. Now there is no direct train service to Upper Silesia, and goods must pass by way of Germany. There is no longer mutual trade between East Prussia and the Corridor. Traffic through the Corridor is always subject to delay, though the train service is less interrupted and there are through trains. But trains passing through the Corridor are travelling prisons; doors are locked, windows shut, and passengers must not alight at intermediate stations. For telegraphic and telephonic purposes, two sea cables have been laid for communicating direct between German Pomerania and East Prussia. Messages by way of the Corridor would be tapped.

Besides the irritating delays to which one section of the German people are subject to while trading with their kinsmen, there is the handicap of tariffs, permits, inhibitions, which are varied by Warsaw decree without notice.

East Prussia wanted all the sympathetic nourishing from the richer territories of the Empire which it could



MARIENBURG CASTLE : CLOISTERS WITH WELL



KÖNIGSBERG DOCKS : NEW GRAIN WAREHOUSES

get. It is the coldest province in Germany. The winters are long and severe ; spring comes six weeks later than in Rhineland. An early winter will ruin the crops. Close association with a larger, richer community was necessary for the province to flourish ; that connection has been interrupted. East Prussia has ceased to be a granary of the Reich, because of its impoverishment and the drawbacks to which its agriculture is subject. As a source of food supply for the German people, East Prussia without these handicaps would have been all the more necessary as the country has lost the rich agricultural province of Posen, a farmer's oasis in the territory attached to Memel, and the highly productive areas of Soldau, and the slice of Marienburg added to the Free City of Danzig.

The commercial handicaps, the infliction of material losses, and the interruption of communication are outweighed in the balance by the spiritual barrier set up between East Prussia and the rest of Germany. Close intercourse between both in the sphere of culture is interfered with. The temperament of the isolated people must be reckoned with. They are a sturdy, stubborn race. They symbolise the spirit of Frederick the Great and suggest some of the characteristics of that irascible, implacable, unconquerable monarch. They do not know when they are beaten and will not remain down. They will never become reconciled to isolation. It is an affront which cuts into the very fibre of their being ; it is an intolerable injury to their pride, their traditions, and their history.

XI

RISE AND DOWNFALL OF THE TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

ONE does not dip far into the history of East Prussia and Pomerellia without coming upon records of the exploits of the Teutonic Knights, nor explore the country as it is to-day without meeting evidences of their former rule and culture. Domination was exercised by these picturesque adventurers—crusaders, Christian missionaries, soldiers, statesmen, traders—for a century and a half. They left the impress of their influence deeply marked upon history and civilisation in the Baltic provinces. Not unnaturally German historians emphasise the part which the Order played in building the future German State. They look upon the Order as following up the conquests of German people against the Eastern heathen tribes—clearing the country between the Elbe and the Oder, beginning a policy of colonisation and settlement which, driving eastward, fixed the frontiers between the West and the East, between Saxon, German, and other Nordic races and the Slav. Polish historians, on the other hand, emphasise their early

struggles against other Slavs and Prussians for a share of the Baltic, and consider that the most notable event in the career of the Teutonic Knights was their crushing defeat by the Poles and their allies, including the Prussians, at the battle of Tannenberg in 1410. They also claim that three centuries of Polish domination in Pomerellia and East Prussia wiped out all traces of Teutonic rule, and that German occupation from 1772 to 1920 failed to counteract the Polish influences among the inhabitants, or to destroy their title to the country.

Several volumes could be written on the accumulated records, apocryphal, conjectural and otherwise, on the history of the warlike Baltic peoples and the struggles between the early Prussians, Lithuanians, Poles, and the Teutonic Knights for the possession of these northern lands. The Lithuanians are not without historical argument to disprove a large part of the pretensions of the Poles, and but for forced marriages, intrigues, corruption, and treachery, there might have been a great Kingdom of Lithuania. The Dukes were at one time formidable powers. Nor must we forget that Vikings, Scandinavians—Gustavus Adolphus and his soldiers of fortune—more than once conquered the Baltic shores and left permanent impressions behind them.

For the purpose of the present sketch it is unnecessary to do more than glance briefly at the outstanding events of history and only for the purpose of trying to see what bearing the domination of the Teutonic

Knights may have on the problems of to-day and on the drift of political thought.

The coming of the Knights to the land, which we now know as East Prussia and the Corridor, in the year 1230 was the result of an appeal for aid by a Polish duke, Conrad of Masovia, whose lands were continually being devastated by the heathen Prussian tribes occupying the country between the Niemen and the lower Vistula, and who had found that buying off the marauders was futile. The Knights determined to conquer and convert these heathen tribes to Christianity. They were, however, fired by other than spiritual considerations : it was the accepted doctrine of the time that pagans could have no title to any property and their lands were at the disposal of whoso had the power to assign them. Armed, therefore, with a pontifical decree endowing them with the whole of the lands of the heathens and with a similar endowment from the Emperor the Knights entered upon their crusade.

It required many campaigns, spread over a long period, before the Teutonic Knights—afterwards joined by another German order, the Brothers of the Sword—could subdue the stubborn Prussians. In the intervals between these campaigns the Knights were setting up a State organisation and colonising the country, but they were never left long in peace as frequently rebellious Prussians broke loose, while Poles, Lithuanians, and Tartars and nondescript races took up the fight against the Order.

State building by the Teutonic Knights continued. Their fighting forces were always growing. They brought colonists from the West to reclaim the marshlands. They founded towns on both sides of the Vistula, settled villages, followed up the conversion of the natives to Christianity by the foundation of sees, churches and monasteries, subject to German Archbishops. Dotted along the coast and throughout East Prussia and Pomerellia, fortified towns arose, the first outposts and guardians of Christianity in the undefined region over which the Order claimed a protectorate or held actual possession. Among the towns to which Charters were granted were Thorn, Culm, Graudenz, Mewe, Neustadt, Konitz, Hela, Putzig, Krockow, Marienwerder, Elbing, and the towns whose names identify their origin and proclaim their purpose: including Marienburg, Frauenburg, Christburg, Königsberg, Johannisburg, and many others.

Several towns were acquired by purchase, including Danzig, Dirschau, and Schwetz, with their domains, from the Margraves of Brandenburg.

Among the Grand Masters of the Order several were conspicuous for their capacity as statesmen. It was Siegfried von Feuchtwanger who transferred the headquarters of the Order from Venice to Marienburg. Between 1335 and 1342 Dietrich, Count of Altenburg, set up schools, organised industry, embanked the Vistula, and began trading. Winrich von Kniprode (1350 to 1382) was occupied in consolidating the

system of Government in a territory which was shaping itself into a sovereignty. Conrad von Wallenrod (1390-1393) made the Court of the Grand Master still more magnificent. He was followed by Conrad von Jungingen, when the Order reached its zenith, claiming a territory which contained 55 fortified cities, 48 castles of the Order, 100 partly fortified castles belonging to the nobility, 200 manors, 700 villages, thousands of hamlets, and hundreds of churches. As became crusaders who sent their hosts abroad to preach the word with a drawn sword, every church was a fortress. Many of these churches stand to-day and are used for worship in spite of their forbidding appearance. The Teutonic Order entered into an alliance with the Hanseatic League. The cities in the League, headed by Lübeck and Bremen, acknowledged the Grand Master as their feudal chief, and the two bodies as well as a conglomeration of kings, dukes, margraves, barons, and archbishops were linked up with the Holy Roman Empire. So powerful was the Order in trade that in 1388 English traders who fought the League were obliged to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce at Marienburg with "the General Master of the House of St. Mary of Teutonia." This treaty brought a respite in the tariff war which existed between England and the Hanseatic League, and English colonies, of which there are memorials to-day, flourished in Danzig and Elbing, and English cloth was sold or bartered for other goods along the Baltic shores and in Russia.

The progress and prosperity of this new Prussia excited the jealousy of the old enemies of the Order. The golden age of the Knights was drawing to an end. There was dissatisfaction with the firmness and disciplinary character of the Order as a governing machine. The Prussian drill sergeant was practising his first steps and the combined ecclesiastic and military dictatorship was taking a hand in trade.

A conspiracy was organised against them. There were traitors within the ranks. The townspeople were in revolt: but the blow came from the Poles, who were as always seeking outlets to the sea. A State was in the making which would bar their way to the Baltic. At this juncture the Polish queen, Hedwiga, married Prince Jagiello of Lithuania, who reconciled and united the former enemies, Lithuania and Poland, and founded a new Polish dynasty. The first fruit of the union was the defeat of the common enemy, the Teutons, at the battle of Tannenberg in 1410. The Order was disrupted, shattered, but not annihilated. A treaty was signed at Thorn in 1411: the Grand Master held on to Marienburg, and the Order strove to remain an independent entity. A new internal enemy, however, arose, the Prussian League, which offered its allegiance to Poland. Disintegration now proceeded rapidly until the fall of Marienburg led to the transfer of the headquarters of the Order to Königsberg. The struggle between the Order and Poland continued, under cover of a nominal peace and unwilling tributary relation. As the Order

declined a new Prussia was rising. The flood of the Reformation swept away one of the props upon which the Order rested. Prussia became Protestant, and with it many of the Knights of the Order, including the Grand Master. The secularisation of the State followed in 1525, when the last Grand Master, Albert von Hohenzollern, renounced the Order and became the first temporal duke of Prussia.¹

The rule of the Order was thus extinguished. It had played its part. It had undertaken the mission of Christianising pagans, raising the cultural and economic standards of the people, founding civic corporations, calling in colonists from Saxony, low Germany, and Holland to reclaim and cultivate the land, fostering trade by and through the Hanseatic towns—all German except one—setting up a nucleus of an organised government, reconciling and merging Prussians with Teutons. Mr. H. W. C. Davis, referring to the colonising work of the Crusaders in his "Mediæval Europe," says :

"Yet in the craft of state-building they showed exceptional sagacity, enlisting as their allies the traders of the Baltic, the peasants of North Germany and the Low Countries. Under their rule and that of their most successful imitators, the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, cities such as Lübeck (founded 1143) and Dantsic (colonised 1308) became centres of German trade and culture : while the open country

¹ Polish suzerainty over East Prussia continued until its *de facto* revocation in 1656. Poland formally renounced its claims at the Treaty of Wehlau in 1657.

in the basins of the Elbe and Oder was covered with newly settled villages of German immigrants. The effects of this colonisation have extended far beyond the lands immediately affected and the limits of mediæval history. The new colonies laid the foundations of modern Prussia and modern Saxony. To their existence is due the connection of Poland and Bohemia with the state system of mediæval Europe, and the consequent division of the Slavonic peoples into a western and an eastern group: the westward extension of the Russian Empire was forestalled and prevented by these early pioneers of German and of Roman influence."

Later ages witnessed the drive of commerce eastward again, German barons holding land and merchant adventurers creating trade in Baltic ports, until the time came when Prussia was a solid State whose commerce, culture, and language overflowed its borders to permeate and dominate the federal Empire.

XII

HISTORICAL AND OTHER HYPOTHESES

GERMAN and Polish historians are in direct antagonism on the claims of their respective countries to the territory now known as the Corridor and the adjacent lands. The Peace Treaty opened a wide field of controversy which conquest and possession had closed temporarily. The changes on the Eastern frontier are justified by data covering every conceivable reason except dynastic which would vindicate the transfer of people and territory from one sovereignty to another—geographical, ethnological, economic, linguistic, religious, cultural. There is no unanimity amongst neutral authorities regarding either the historical or other grounds for the repartition of territories. Nor is there consistency in the policy of the annexationists. Reasons given in one case are not in harmony with the claims supported in other cases and in no instance can a combination of data, reasons, and arguments be found which will meet with general agreement by all authorities. Some of

the lands allotted to Poland were never at any time inhabited by an indisputably Polish population. A large slice of the territory claimed by Poland on historical grounds is also claimed by Lithuania on historical and dynastic considerations. Germany claims that the original Prussians had at least equal rights with the Poles for the possession of Pomerellia, and the territory named after them. But while ultimately merging with the Teutons and playing a prominent part in building up the future German Empire, these early Prussians helped the Poles to defeat the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Tannenberg in 1410, for which they were deprived by the Diet of Lublin of the compensation promised them, which was territorial autonomy. But for this renunciation of a promise embodied in a solemn treaty, the Poles would have had no historical claim to any part of East Prussia. While on this question of the right of conquest, the Scandinavians cannot be ignored. They acquired the Baltic Littoral and for a time were the unchallenged conquerors of Pomerellia. While the period of Swedish domination was not long, this virile Nordic race left its impression behind them. It is also said that the name of Gdynia and the Polish name for Danzig—Gdansk—are both Gothic words of Swedish origin. The name of Danzig meant Gothland, or the district of the Goths.¹

Changes of territory in ancient times were due also to intermarriage of the ruling families.

1 According to Professor Rudnicke of Posen

The Poles support what they term the restoration of their territory on the ground that they were in possession of part of East Prussia and Pomerellia for a longer period than were the members of the Teutonic race. It boils down to a question of building up a nation which does not depend in the first place on race, language, or religion. On this point Lecky, the English historian, states the case of nation building in the following terms in "Democracy and Liberty":

"As a matter of history, all great nations have been formed, in the first instance, by many successive conquests and aggrandisements, and have gradually become more or less perfectly fused into a single organism. Race, except when it is marked by colour, is usually a most obscure and deceptive guide, and in most European countries different race elements are inextricably mixed. Language and religion have had a much greater and deeper power in forming national unities; but there are examples of different creeds and languages very successfully blended into one nationality, and there are examples of separations of feeling and character, due to historical, political, and industrial causes, existing where race, creed, and language are all the same."

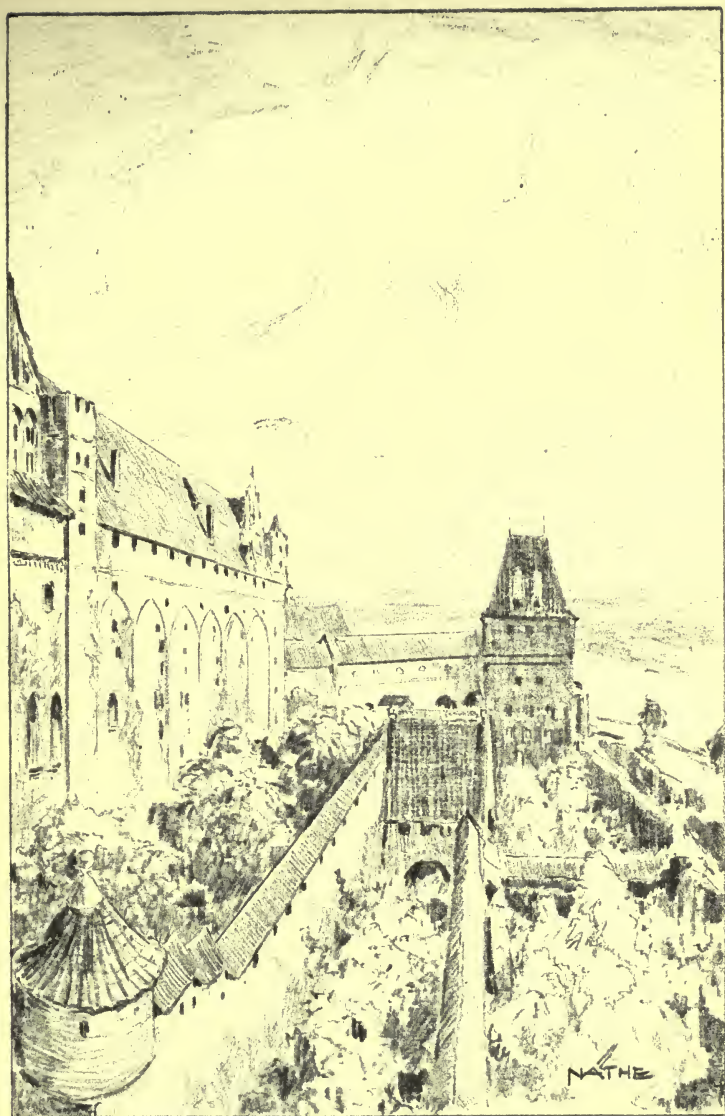
The mixture of races to which Lecky refers is noticeable among the border peoples of the Eastern frontier. Poles have germanised their names and Germans have polonised theirs. Religion has maintained a dividing line and language persists after assimilation in other directions has been accomplished.

Throughout these regions which have been in dispute the Poles have been mainly the agriculturists and small traders, the Germans the industrialists, merchants, and financiers. The manufactures in Congress Poland were developed by Germans, industries remain in the control of denationalised Germans : German is the language of international commerce in Poland and Central Europe. In Warsaw, German names are yet as conspicuous in the telephone directory as are Polish. Neither the old frontier nor the new at any part is a clean cut division of race. Language is the most persistent symbol of nationalism. Centuries of close association with the English and the English language have not extinguished Gaelic in the Highlands of Scotland, Welsh in Wales, or Erse in Ireland—three kindred Celtic languages. Lithuanian remained the home language of the people after Russia had prohibited its use in any form. Polish is another example of the vitality of a language when sovereignty has changed. Even a language in process of evolution cannot be permanently suppressed by conquerors.

William of Normandy and his barons succeeded in frenchifying England for a period after the Battle of Hastings, imposing on the country the Norman-French language for official purposes and displacing Latin in the schools. The only reminiscence of this Norman-French language for centuries has been the phrase used by the King in giving consent to Bills after they have passed Parliament, "Le Roy le Veult." French-Norman institutions were established, but the English

language—crude immature as it was—and civilisation slowly fought their way back and the two countries became distinct in every respect before, and still more after, the Hundred Years War. Just as William the Conqueror claimed the right to the Crown of England, and never really conquered the country, as his claim was conceded after the Battle of Hastings against Harold, who had less right to the succession, so Henry VI of England and his Plantagenet successors proclaimed themselves Kings of France for centuries afterwards. Other fantastic claims on historical grounds could be advanced for just as much reason as some of the pretensions of the Poles. Spain might seek to re-establish a connection with Holland and the Low Countries, and there are certainly as many impressions of Spanish civilisation left in Belgium and Flanders as there are of Polish in East Prussia. In the case of France and England the facts of geography helped to shape the fortunes of the ruling dynasties and the two nations. So in the case of East Prussia and Poland, Germany sought outposts in the East, penetrating farther and farther along the Baltic in order to stem the inrush of wilder races. There was continuity of physical geography and trade routes from east to west.

One of the earliest books issued in England during the Great War, exploring the avenues of settlement, and one of the most prescient, was written by Mr. C. Ernest Fayle, with an introduction by Lord Esher, and published in the spring of 1915 ("The Great



MARIENBURG CASTLE: MOAT AND OUTER WALLS

Settlement"). The problem which afterwards developed was then unknown. The author wrote :

"The delimitation of a frontier would be difficult since districts purely Prussian are divided by districts mainly Polish. In such a case as this it is useless to wrangle over ancient history. A district which has been Prussian for centuries, which is to-day German in speech and sentiment, cannot be claimed for the new Poland on the ground that its original inhabitants were Slavs. The Prussians themselves are largely of Slavonic origin. Northern Germany as a whole acquired its Teutonic character as the result of conquest and assimilation : but where that assimilation has taken place, it is idle to go back to the time of Charlemagne, or even to that of the Teutonic Knights, for racial boundaries. It is existing national sentiment which we have to consider to-day, not racial origins which have been modified by centuries of history. In the same way, it cannot be contended that Danzig and Königsberg are to-day Polish because they once belonged to Poland. We have to remember that Poland in the days of her independence was not averse from conquest, and the extreme limits of her ancient power cannot be taken as her natural boundaries. Towns and districts which have been for centuries identified with German history and which are to-day purely German in character cannot be taken from Germany without creating sources of unrest and discord exactly similar to those created by German

aggression in the past. On the other hand, the introduction of German colonists as an instrument of Prussianisation does not rob essentially Polish districts of their national character. The one great difficulty is presented by a narrow slip of originally Polish territory (in West Prussia) which runs up to the Baltic and divides East Prussia from the remainder of the Empire. It is not to be expected that Germany would consent, save in the last extremity, to anything approaching dismemberment, or would refrain from endeavours to upset any such arrangement if it were carried out. On the other hand, it is contended that geographical and economic considerations suggest that the mouth of the Vistula should be in the possession of the State through whose territory it runs and that free access to the sea is necessary for the prosperity of the reconstituted Polish kingdom. This argument is certainly a strong one, but the political difficulties involved in a separation of East Prussia from the rest of Germany would appear to be decisive. Not only is it inconceivable that Germany would submit to such dismemberment without a struggle which might indefinitely protract the war, but it is as certain as anything in foreign policy can be, that it would lead to a renewal of war in the future. A compromise might perhaps be found in leaving Danzig to Germany, but providing for the free navigation of the Vistula and a bonded railway from Danzig to the Polish frontier."

The author of this well-reasoned statement foresaw clearly the difficulties which would arise and which have emerged, and was unknowingly interpreting the opinions of English statesmen.

In justifying the frontier as fixed by the Peace Treaty, the Poles put their historical argument in the foreground. Counted by years of occupation of the Corridor as between Poles and Germans there is little difference. Poles claim that their domination of the Corridor territory endured 318 years (reduced by German reckoning to 203 years) while the Germans rule was 294 years.

To weigh and balance the periods of occupation of territories by the length of years is fallacious. In the Middle Ages occupation was loose and unstable. It was only effective along certain routes and in fortified centres. The crucial period, when the inhabitants of East and West Prussia were moulded very largely into one nationality, was during the last hundred years—the age of invention, transportation, science, commerce, industry, the spread of education, the organs of public service and the institution of ordered Government. During the period of German occupation the territory was transformed from a region of desert and swamps into rich and fertile lands, cities were built up and centres of trade and industry established.

Members of the Peace Conference were landed in a tangle of inconsistencies by the Polish claims and endeavoured to reconcile them with their own guiding principles, as laid down by President Wilson. One set

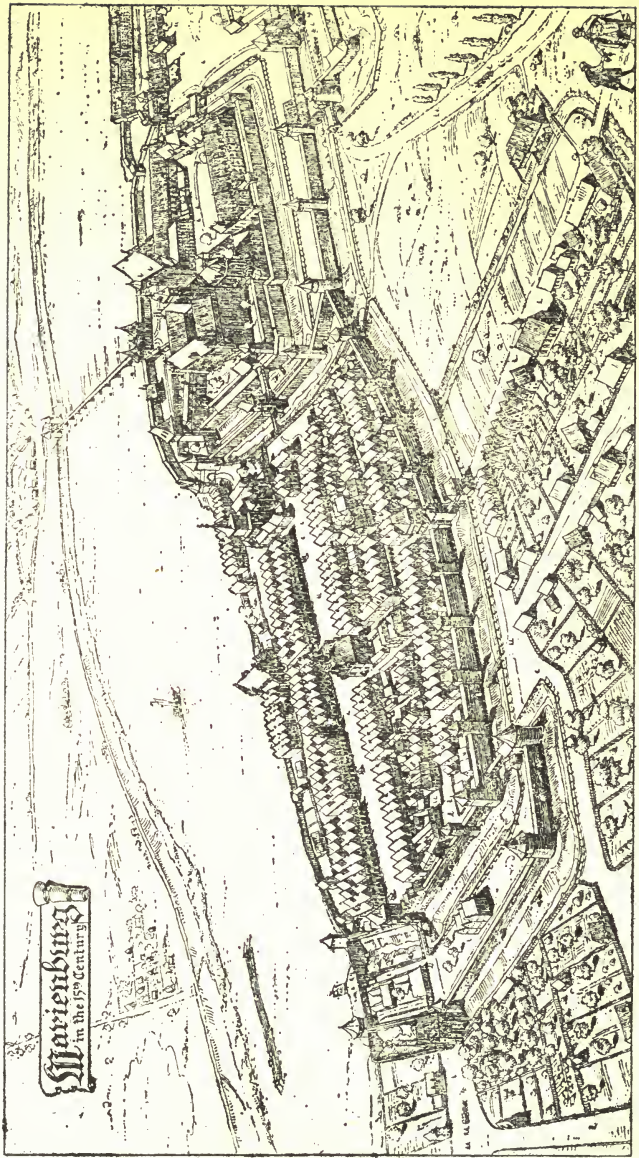
of people were claimed by the Poles because they were Roman Catholics and spoke a Polish dialect. Another set, speaking another Polish dialect, were also claimed, although they were Protestants. Neither language nor religion is a test of nationality. Nor is race a universal test, as many diverse races live happily under the same sovereignty, as witness the diversity of races within the British Empire.

XIII

MARIENBURG AND ITS MEMORIES

WHEN, in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, the Teutonic Order was invited by the Polish Duke Conrad of Masovia to come to his aid against the heathen Prussians who overran his possessions, the Crusaders set about the task with Christian thoroughness, simultaneously fighting and converting the enemy. They conquered the territory between the Vistula and the Niemen. They fixed upon a strategic position on the Nogat and there they built their headquarters, a fortress of imposing dimensions, and named it—after the patron saint of the Order—Marienburg. The castle was not built until fifty years after the foundation of castles and towns higher up the Vistula—like Thorn and Culm; the Grand Master, who was a Prince of the Empire, the temporal and spiritual head of this religious order, did not transfer his Court to Marienburg until 1309.

The castle symbolised German mediæval artistic achievement which had then reached its zenith, as



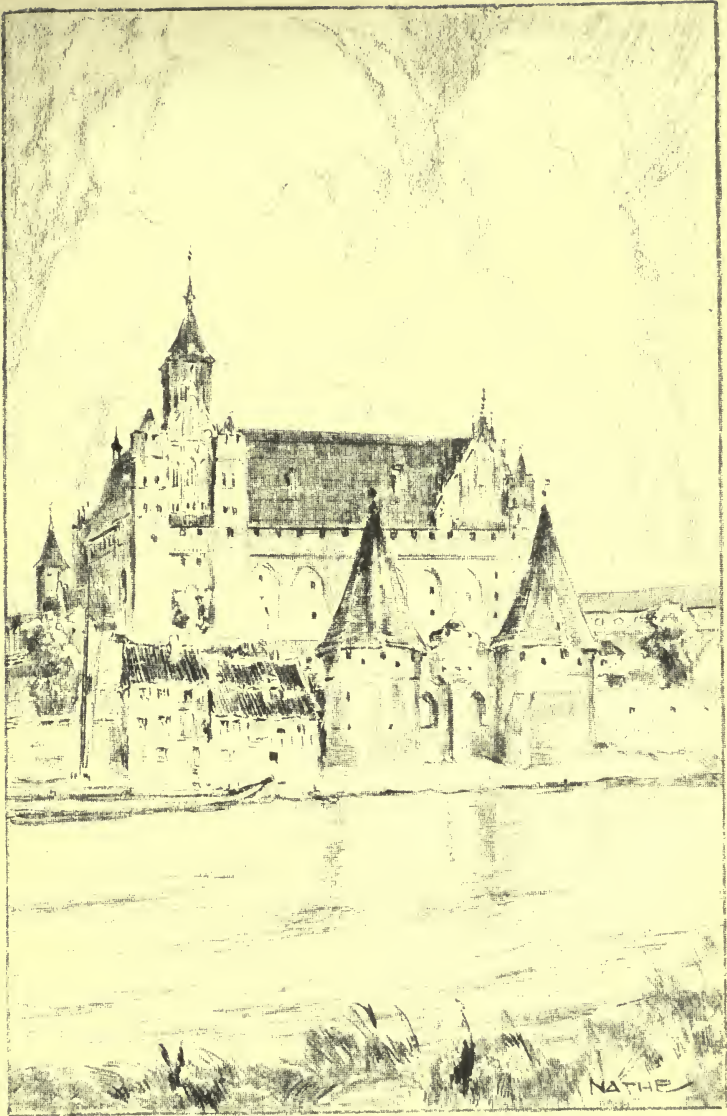
witness such examples as the cathedrals of Strassburg, Cologne, and Milan, and of other works in Italy where Teuton architects were employed. But art, then as now, was international, and Italian artists and architects influenced the German builders of Marienburg Castle, which has also a flavour of oriental influence. It was a mighty effort; it left for all time an indestructible monument to Teutonic culture. For a century and a half it was the centre from which radiated civilising and colonising influences throughout Eastern Europe. It was the official residence of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Order and of the Government, the home of the Knights and their administrative headquarters, the High Court of Justice, the centre of learning and of trade, as well as a fortified stronghold, an arsenal and a barracks in time of war. Among the large number of crusaders who came to help the Teutonic Knights figures Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, who was afterwards Henry IV of England.

Marienburg to-day enshrines memories which are treasured by German people as among the most sacred in their history. Its restoration, carried out by Prussian Kings with meticulous regard for historic accuracy, was begun by Frederick William III, after the Napoleonic wars, and finished by the ex-Kaiser, who celebrated the event by holding an imposing pageant, in which he wore the vestments and arms of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and at which Knights of the English branch of the Order, amongst others the Marquis of Breadalbane, took part. In this work

of restoration the most eminent authorities were consulted and the best artists and craftsmen employed.

The castle is a majestic and imposing structure. It is of interest to us to-day because of its place in the history of German civilisation and its psychological effect on the German people.

The castle stands on an eminence on the right bank of the Nogat. The main street of the town which grew up round the castle leads to the high frowning wall whose lofty choir wall is decorated by a gigantic mosaic representing the Mother of God bearing in her arms the infant Christ—the work of mediæval Italian artists. The entrance is over the original drawbridge and moat—now overgrown with turf. Heavy postern gates admit to a large paved courtyard in which are stacked halberds, pikes, stone cannon balls and all the mediæval paraphernalia of warfare. The visitor realises the colossal scale upon which the castle was planned. Everything is vast ; the kitchens, the refectories, the dormitories, the chapel, the cloisters, the vaulted cellars, the assembly rooms, and the administrative offices. The Grand Master's quarters, partly detached from the main structure, are a fortress in themselves and contain a magnificent chapel. His summer palace with its graceful column, vaulted ceiling, and beautiful windows suggests the luxury enjoyed by the head of the Order. The castle embodied the most advanced methods of construction known in mediæval times ; it included a central heating installation—



MARIENBURG CASTLE

perforated brass plates set in the floor permitting heat to rise from charcoal burners underneath. Round the top of the battlements runs a gallery for accommodating defenders of the fortress. It is reached by narrow dark stairways. The Knights could not have been men of bulky stature, as an ordinary sized man has to squeeze through the apertures without the cumbersome armour which encased them.

A pathetic relic of the golden age of Marienburg is the beautiful Gothic church of the Knights. Dust encrusts the carving on the oaken stalls, the knightly banners hang dejectedly from the walls, statues of the madonna, saints and martyrs gaze at inquisitive visitors with a placid sadness in their painted eyes as though remembering and regretting the perfume of the incense which rose to the high vaulted ceiling in the days of their glory. Inside the walls there is also a tiny secluded cemetery in which repose the bodies of those of the Teutonic Knights, who escaping death on the battle-fields, died in peace within the confines of the cathedral-fortress of the Mother of God.

Inseparably associated with the Castle is the town of the same name. Originally it was a dependency of the Castle. It was occupied by merchants, traders, workers. The town suffered when the Order was dispersed; but survived through the vicissitudes that followed until it was once more securely in German hands. Napoleon occupied it on his Eastern campaign and used the Castle as a hospital.

The industrial development of the nineteenth century

found Marienburg a progressive community: the town was an important trading centre on main lines of communication, feeding the ports of Danzig and Elbing and serving a rich agricultural hinterland. It was on the main railway line from Berlin to the East; it was a warehouse and a clearing centre; its industries were flourishing and its suburbs expanding on the other side of the Nogat. The current of trade by river and rail from southward beyond Thorn and Bromberg, and eastward to Königsberg, Tilsit, and Memel, contributed to the prosperity of Marienburg. Its strategic position remained through the centuries: Hindenburg made it his general headquarters when he began his campaign against the Russians which ended in their crushing defeat at Tannenberg.

The creation of the Corridor and the Free City of Danzig, as I have shown in another chapter, tore the town in two and cut it off from its best markets. Its richest sugar-beet fields went to build up the State of Danzig, factories were lost, suburbs cut away, while the Polish customs union restricts, and in some cases prohibits, trade with Danzig and the Corridor. A wave of depression swept over the neighbourhood. The town was crushed by its debts and the weight of unemployed refugees driven from the Corridor. The community, with characteristic Prussian stubbornness, made heroic efforts to build up more industries and find new markets. The doors were barred by tariffs in every direction except eastward, and here the old established

towns of Elbing and Marienwerder were fighting to hold their own. Nevertheless, a new industrial quarter was built near the railway station, light railways constructed, and cheap transport organised. One asset the town exploits : that is itself, its historic interests, its mediæval institutions. Motor-bus services are run, a daily air service to and from Danzig has been established, and a municipal aerodrome laid out. Tourists are encouraged. The amenities of the town have been improved : the arts have been encouraged, sports grounds, bathing establishments and public pleasure grounds laid out or extended. Outward appearances, however, are misleading : the town carries a heavy load and makes sacrifices in the hope that its patriotism will one day be rewarded ; but in the hearts of the people there is extreme bitterness. A local comment made to me was :

“It is with the idea of ‘dressing up the shop window’ that there has been laid over the town a sort of gaiety so that its bleeding condition may not be apparent to the passing visitor, who is, therefore, deceived as to the true position of the patient’s health. Marienburg was not established with the idea that it should become a small agricultural town ; it was planned to be a trade and commercial centre with a wide reaching industrial radius. It is easy to picture what has been the result of cutting such a town in two—tearing up the roots of industry, which have been steadily growing for three-quarters of a century. Over the river on the Danzig

side lies a workers' suburb, without opportunities for work, without a chemist's shop, without a church, without a cemetery, without a water supply or a sewerage system or lighting plant of its own, and behind the suburb a stretch of land peopled by peasants, who find themselves deprived of their accustomed markets.

"In Marienburg there is a collection of organisations which, for centuries drew their existence from the work supplied by, and the trade which was carried on by the people on both sides of the river. And not all the efforts of the town council will ever be great enough to replace this loss. For in between the two banks of the river there is the rigorously guarded customs boundary with its continual supervision, its daily irritations which make the population ever more bitter and prone to excitement. Daily industrial and cultural distress increases on both sides of the river."

This interpretation of local sentiment while picturesque, is not exaggerated. The Burgomaster himself said :

"It was German endeavour which brought to the land the knowledge of Christianity and culture, that made out of a land of marshes, swamps, and heathenism a prosperous province. For many centuries only German settlers came and cultivated that land. . . . These things are burnt into the souls of the population, and taken in connection with the

industrial handicaps from which we suffer are growing into a feeling of bitterness and hate daily increasing in strength which will one day have to be reckoned with. It is the knowledge of this spirit which is growing which urges us to press for something to be done which will correct—and speedily—the geographical, racial, industrial, and cultural error which is becoming increasingly unbearable.”

XIV

THE MISFORTUNES OF MEMEL

THE cession of Memel need not have been one of the consequences of the Corridor, but it was. This most easterly outpost of old Germany was a commercial port and a timber and saw-mill centre. It was not fortified. Poland aspired to possess Memel as well as Danzig.

The Peace Conference was more concerned in depriving Germany of this frontier town than in settling its destiny. It was held in reserve for Lithuania, subject to the good behaviour of that little new country when it had organised itself into a stable state.

The Territory is a strip 150 kilometres long and an average of 20 kilometres wide on the east bank of the Niemen river and between East Prussia and Lithuania. The town has a population of about 30,000, and the rest of the territory, which is rich agricultural land with a few small towns and villages, contains about 110,000 inhabitants. The town is well built and the community well organised on modern German lines.

Memel itself is thoroughly German, and the territory attached to it has been germanised through many generations. Ethnologically the majority of the inhabitants are not German : they are of mixed race and speak of themselves as Memelites or Memelländer, but culturally they are and always have been German.

Historically, Memel is one of the oldest territories in Germany. The Commission of the Conference of Ambassadors, reporting in 1923, stated the historical aspect of the Memel problem as follows :

“Memel is the oldest German town in East Prussia and has never belonged to Lithuania. In the thirteenth century a number of Knights of the Brotherhood of the Sword, a branch of the Teutonic Order, came from Riga and established a colony and a fortress on the site of the town. At that time the population of the northern part of the territory was Latvian, and that of the southern part, Lithuanian. Lithuanians, Latvians, and Old Prussians are racially allied, all belonging to the Baltic family. It need hardly be observed that this race has no connection with the Slav. The population of the territory has been very largely Teutonised and that of the town is almost exclusively German. This is perfectly natural, for the German frontier has not shifted for five hundred years.”

The inhabitants did not welcome the projected annexation to Lithuania. The ambassadors appreciated the consequences of the separation of Memel from Germany, and feared a clash between two

civilisations and conflict of interests, as their report pointed out that :

“The frontier marks an abrupt and sudden change from one civilisation to another with at least a century in between them. On one side there are no illiterates. The country is covered with well-kept roads leading to villages of comfortable, well-built houses. The land is cultivated by modern methods. The small-holding system has been developed side by side with the system of large farms. On the other side of the frontier the country people live in the direst poverty. There is practically no education. Roads are almost unknown. The peasants know nothing about clearing and manuring the land, and let it lie fallow for two years before resuming cultivation.”

The contrast to-day is just as striking as it was in 1923. I visited several farms in the territory : they were models of the most advanced methods in agriculture. There were great herds of pedigree cattle, horses, and pigs. Formerly, the farmers carried on a profitable trade in stock and in seeds with the rest of East Prussia. Now the German customs authorities raise difficulties other than tariffs as the Lithuanian veterinary service represents a low standard. As the Ambassadors foresaw, Agrarian Reform—the cutting up of large farms among peasants—has had uneconomic consequences. A state in which more than 80 per cent. of the population live on the land is sometimes short in its supply of rye for home consumption. The Lithuanian Government

is wrestling manfully with its problem of raising the standard of civilisation among its inhabitants ; but has to—or thinks it must—divert a good deal of its energies in maintaining “a state of war” with Poland. The territory inherited by Lithuania was one of the most backward in old Russia—a country without order or adequate railways, with bad roads, no sanitation or decent houses, inhabited by a people who accepted low standards of comfort and had no intellectual outlook. To link up well-organised Memel, with its high standard of culture, with the primitive backwoods, brought into juxtaposition two civilisations which are irreconcilable.

It was feared that the experiment would be a failure when it was entered into. The Conference of Ambassadors, through their Extraordinary Commission, recognised that the scheme was not fundamentally sound. They considered that by far the best solution would have been the constitution of an independent state under the supervision of a High Commissioner, and seemed to regret that any understanding had been given to the contrary.

However, the policy of the Peace Conference and the situation of Memel marked its fate. The policy was to chop slices off Germany : Memel, as the most easterly city in the old Empire, was, therefore, doomed. Moreover, as a Baltic port, it was required by Lithuania, on the principle, not consistently adhered to, that every new landlocked country must have a corridor leading to a seaport in its own territory.

As the Peace Conference intended Memel to be an outlet for Poland as well as a port for Lithuania, the Niemen or Memel river was internationalised from Grodno on the Polish frontier to the sea, with all the connecting navigable channels and canals.

The Memel territory has had more experience in variety of government than any other newly created state. Pending the recognition of Lithuania the Supreme Council carried on the government of the territory as a possession of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers. The administration, in the first instance, was carried on under a French general with a German directorate: a civil administration was afterwards set up under a French civil official. This system lasted for two years, during which time as little disturbance as possible was caused to the old regime. The population of Memel were fairly satisfied with their Government, and rather proud to be thought worthy of becoming a little State. During these two years important improvements were carried out at the port.

The Lithuanians became restive at the delay in handing over their prize. Their interest flamed into activity as the result of the loss of Vilna, their capital, with one-third of their territory and a million population, by the predatory raid of the Poles in October, 1920.

In September, 1920, the League had fixed a provisional line of demarcation between the two countries and appointed a Military Commission to see that the

conditions were observed on the spot. Mr. Paderewski, the Polish representative at Geneva, shook hands somewhat prematurely and ostentatiously with the Lithuanian representatives over the triumph of peaceful negotiations, and declared that Poland had set a noble example to the world in averting war, and that the League of Nations had for ever established its reputation as a mediator. The Military Commission, headed by officers from France, Italy, England, Spain, and Japan, with a Frenchman as chairman, started off to the scene of the erstwhile trouble. On October 7th, 1920, they fixed the frontier, established a neutral zone, and representatives of Poland and Lithuania signed what is known as the Suwalki Agreement. Two days later, October 9th, General Zeligowski, at the head of a Polish army, marched on Vilna and declared that if the Lithuanian troops did not withdraw he would resort to force. The Military Mission, instead of standing their ground, with the moral power of five great nations and the League, withdrew at the suggestion of the French chairman—who was sympathetic with the Poles—to Warsaw, seeking information, and thence they went to Brussels, and never returned. The enormity of the outrage committed by General Zeligowski, who declared that he was acting entirely on his own initiative, unknown to the Polish Government or the heads of the army, is all the worse when, as was soon discovered, the raid had been planned by Marshal Pilsudski, then President of Poland. Later on Mr. Paderewski informed the Supreme

Council that his Government disavowed the deed and condemned General Zeligowski. The ink on the treaty which Poland signed by the hand of Pilsudski was not dry when the conspiracy to raid the town and province was hatched.

We are not concerned to pursue the apparently interminable controversy over Vilna, but only to deal with its reactions on Memel. If there had been no Vilna problem there would have been no Memel problem.

As the Lithuanians saw no hope of recovering Vilna by negotiation or by the moral influence of the League of Nations and of the Conference of Ambassadors—both of which bodies, followed by the Allies, condoned the outrage by recognising the wrongful possession of the province—they followed the example of the Poles and took forcible possession of Memel. There was a pretence of a local revolt against the rule of the High Commissioner and of the German Directorate; but as the Extraordinary Commission of the Conference of Ambassadors reported, the revolution was organised by the Lithuanian Government. The company of French chasseurs made practically no defence. The Lithuanians took forcible possession on January 10th, 1923, and reproducing the Vilna precedent, remained, and another long series of negotiations was entered upon. (They did not imitate the Poles in holding a plebiscite so “loaded” that it was bound to result in their favour.)

The Conference of Ambassadors decided on February 16th, 1923, to establish an autonomous Government

in Memel under the sovereignty of Lithuania, and proceeded to frame a "Convention with Lithuania in conformity with the present decision." This was easier to decide than to carry into effect. The Lithuanians developed a talent for leisurely diplomacy and scientific obstructive tactics. As if anticipating trouble the Conference of Ambassadors sent "an extraordinary commission" to Memel to make inquiries on the spot, and on its report in March, 1923, another Commission proceeded to draw up the Convention. But Lithuania contested almost every clause of the draft Convention. Then began another phase of negotiations in which the Conference of Ambassadors representing the "British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, signatories, with the United States of America as the Principal Allied and Associated Powers," against the Lithuanians, who fought for position inch by inch and succeeded by strategy and procrastination in holding up a final decision during the whole of 1923. They were not brow-beaten by a demonstration of two British gun-boats or subdued into submission by the dreadnoughts of diplomacy. The Convention drawn up was not acceptable to Lithuania or to Poland. Still another Commission was sent to Memel: this time under the direction of the Hon. Norman Davis, former Under Secretary of State in the United States. He was able to report to the League of Nations in March, 1924, that the Commission had reached an agreement which was in conformity with the decision of the Conference of Ambassadors eleven months previously. There was

to be an autonomous local Government and a Harbour Board with an efficient administration and full facilities for all interested in the commerce of the port, including all facilities for traffic on the Niemen. The League of Nations adopted the Convention and Statute and felt that one anxious problem was at last out of the way.

Lithuania was not wasting opportunities during its long period of illegal possession, and after, with much delay, a local Diet based on universal suffrage had been elected, the Lithuanian Government tried to undermine some of the main clauses in the Convention and to defeat the decisions of the representative Diet.

The first election under the Convention took place in May, 1926. There were 29 members, of whom 11 represented the Agrarian party, 11 the Middle Class party: 5 were Socialists, and only 2 pro-Lithuanian. A large majority of the members comprised the *Einheitsfront* party in favour of real autonomy. No candidate backed by the Central Government was returned, in spite of that fact the territory had been ruled by the influence of the Central authorities.

The fresh election to the Memel Diet, held on August 31st, 1927, gave an overwhelming majority to the Memel People's Party and the Farmers' Party, each returning ten members—twenty out of a total of twenty-nine. The Social Democrats lost two members and the Communists, not formerly represented, gained two. The Pan-Lithuanians, with the help of scattered votes, and in consequence of the increase of

Lithuanian residents, elected four members for the first time.

Instead of the Directorate or Cabinet being responsible to the Diet, they are made responsible to the Governor, who is appointed by the Lithuanian Government. Article 17 of the Statute says that the President shall be appointed by the Governor and shall hold office so long as he possesses the confidence of the Diet : and the President appoints the other four directors; but the system has not worked out in accordance with these provisions. When the Directorate are at loggerheads with the Diet the Governor threatens to appoint a new president, who will re-appoint the directors or select others to suit himself. There has, therefore, been perpetual friction between the two bodies. The democratic assembly has not asserted its authority or maintained its rights. It has succumbed to the domineering policy of the Kovno authorities.

Provision is made in the Convention that in case of infraction any member of the League Council (Article 17) can draw attention to the matter, which would be then open for discussion, and in case of differences of opinion on questions of law the dispute is to be referred to the Permanent Court at the Hague. The course of procedure seems to be quite clear and was further enforced by a resolution of the League Council passed on September 28th, 1925. When, however, the Memel Diet presented petitions in 1926 setting forth alleged violations of the Convention, the

Lithuanian Government raised all sorts of obstacles regarding procedure to prevent inquiry and discussion so that the Memel Diet had to engage an American jurist, Mr. David Hunter Miller, to advise them on the interpretation of the Convention. Mr. Miller had no difficulty in supporting convincingly the contention of the Diet. The Convention was framed for the protection of the inhabitants of the Memel territory and the Diet was the creation of the Convention and of the League. It was perfectly clear that the Council could receive memorials and petitions, and when once submitted, it was open to members of the Council to raise discussions upon them. Mr. Miller ended the case which he presented to the Committee of Jurists appointed by the League with an appeal. He said :—

“The hopes for the future will be brighter and the progress of the Republic of Lithuania and of the Lithuanian people as a whole, and of the Memel territory and of the citizens of Memel—Lithuanians whose future is bound up with that of their fellow nationals—will be promoted if the procedure under the Convention as now rules by the Council be followed.

There is now a pathway to the League of Nations and the door is open. The request now made is that the door be not closed.”

The Memel Statute continues to be contravened with impunity. While the Convention provides for equality in languages, preference is given to Lithuanian

The name of the territory is changed to Klaipeda, and in official documents in French and English, reference is made to the Klaipeda Convention, although international law knows of no such designation. The names in the telephone directory have been changed to Lithuanian. Anyone in Memel who communicates with the authorities in Kovno must write in Lithuanian. Judges must speak both languages ; but there is a shortage of judges, and the Government will not admit trained judges from Germany. The law in the territory is German and the Lithuanians are unable to find competent judges within the territory. It is the same to some extent with regard to teachers. Passports, while issued according to the Convention by the Memel authorities, are not valid unless the visa is given by the Lithuanian Governor, which is contrary to the spirit of the Statute.

The Central Government Departments interfere with the freedom of action of the local administration in many ways, especially in connection with the management of the port. The saw-mills of Memel are idle, and although there is a good volume of shipping the traffic is chiefly in transit goods, which does not help local industry.

The Convention entrusted the management of the port to a Harbour Board consisting of three members, one to be appointed by the League of Nations, one by the Lithuanian Government, and one by the Directorate of the Memel territory. By one subterfuge or another the Kovno authorities have managed to

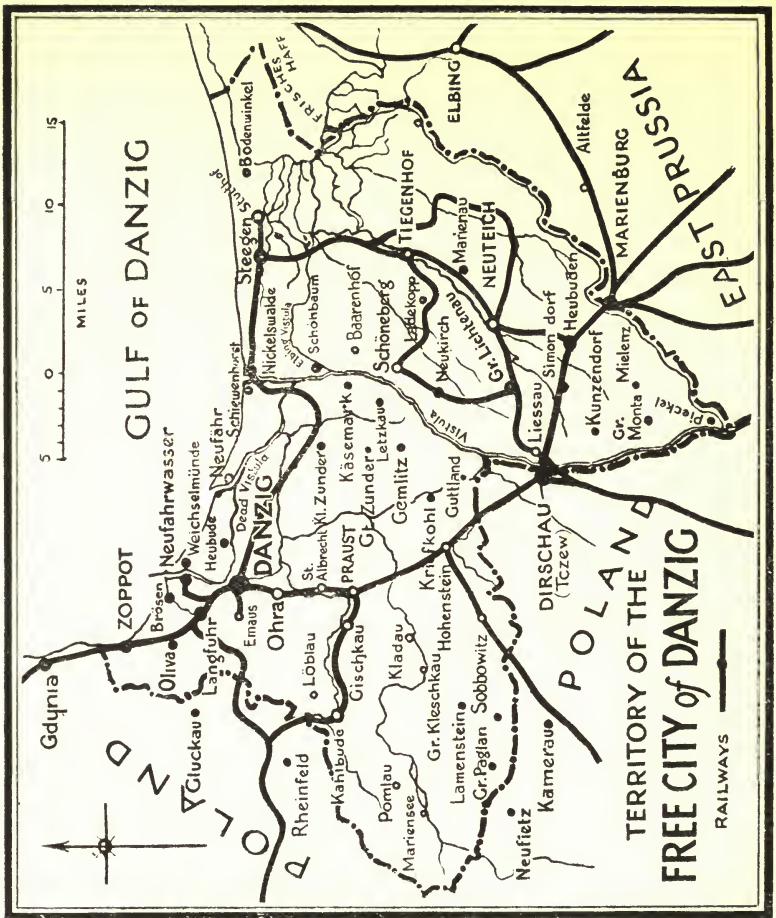
maintain control of the port. The first representative appointed by the League of Nations, who was the only expert in port management on the Board, found himself without influence and more than once threatened to resign.

Poland was entitled to a free zone within the port : that has not yet been provided. Lithuania, while controlling the port administration, does not use the port to a large extent. Her exports of goods for the most part pass through Libau or are sent by rail to Germany. This is due partly to the bad railway communication—which is being remedied—and also to the absence of adequate facilities at the port compared with its competitors for handling goods. The port of Memel is very much in need of new sheds, granaries, cold storage accommodation, and other facilities. The Russian transit traffic will not be sent through Memel until the port is better equipped and the charges decreased. There are no funds available at present for these improvements.

The estimated expenditure of the Port for 1928 was 2,558,000 lits., and the receipts 455,000 lits. The contribution from the Lithuanian State was 2,103,000 lits.

Memel is not self-supporting. The expenses of administration in regard to local and port affairs and relations with the Lithuanian Government are excessive. Nor is there any prospect of improved trade while the present system remains and the conflict between Lithuania and Poland continues.

There has been an increase in the shipping of the port. The net tonnage has increased 20 per cent. since 1924. The chief trade is in coal—importation of Westphalian and British coal for local consumption and for the Lithuanian railways. These figures, however, when compared with those for the port of Danzig and other North European ports, show that the prosperity of Memel is being artificially restricted. The interest of its inhabitants was not a factor which determined the fate of the town and territory.



The Free City of Danzig.
 (The territory marked Poland on left is part of Corridor.)

XV

DANZIG

I : ITS PLACE IN HISTORY AND POLITICAL STATUS

DANZIG troubled the Peace Conference. The majority of the territorial experts favoured annexation of the city to the new Polish State as the vestibule of the Corridor. The Poles asked for more : that if they failed in their major claim to the whole of East Prussia, they should be given the city and port of Danzig and a large slice of the province, excluding Königsberg, which was to be isolated as a tiny republic under Polish suzerainty. Like the Corridor territory, Danzig was not permitted to have a say in deciding its own destiny.

History was drawn upon to justify annexation to Poland—restitution it was called—and the controversy was long and impassioned. Mr. Lloyd George ended the wrangle by accepting a compromise : the creation of a free city under protection of the League of Nations.

Memories of the old Hanseatic City, with its merchant princes and mediæval grandeur, were revived,

and a re-invigorated community, free and prosperous, was envisaged with a port occupying the premier position on the Baltic.

This so-called solution has not worked out according to the best intentions of the peacemakers. Danzig has proved a troublesome child of the League. Few council meetings at Geneva are without discussions on Danzig problems or grievances.

The City-State of Danzig consists of the city of Danzig—which for over two centuries was under the suzerainty of the kings of Poland—although never forming part of the Polish kingdom—the town and seaside resort of Zoppot, and three rural districts. The population in 1924 was 383,994, of which 206,458 inhabited the old city. The annexed territories were never subject to Poland.

The Free City is burdened with four Constitutions or charters ; (1) that imposed upon it by the Treaty of Versailles : (2) the Danzig-Polish Convention negotiated by the Allied Powers : (3) the local constitution : and (4) the Covenant of the League of Nations. It is under six Governmental authorities ; (1) the Senate of 120 members, elected by universal suffrage (the voting age for both sexes is 20) : (2) the Polish Government, which is responsible for foreign affairs, transit and customs : (3) the Harbour Board, half the members of which are Poles, the other half Danzigers, with a foreign-neutral chairman : (4) the High Commissioner appointed by the League, whose duty is to interpret

the various constitutions and to settle disputes : (5) the Council of the League, which hears appeals, and the High Court of the Hague, and (6) finally, the whole League of Nations, the suzerain super-power.

The Free City is at the mercy of Poland by land, and of the Allies by sea. It has no means of defence, either military or naval ; it has little or no control over its customs. Its railways are controlled by Poland. It is tied down by restrictions in relation to emigration, expulsion of aliens, naturalisation, etc. The consent of Poland is necessary to raise a foreign loan. Danzig Government officials can only communicate with Germany through Warsaw, and have no power over the methods adopted or the delays which may take place.

The tangle of governmental systems gives rise to interminable disputes. The disputes, appeals, discussions, conferences, settlements, and unsettlements, and the prolonged negotiations which have taken place form a considerable part of the controversial literature of the League. The combined result is a veritable jungle of protocols, decisions, and interpretations, from which no jurist can find a way out.

The main questions which stand out in a study of Danzig are :

(1) Its place in the history of the Baltic and its political and economic connection with Poland from 1454 to 1793 : (2) the commercial status of the city and port under the present regime, and comparisons with its position during its alliance with Poland : (3) how the regime works, as illustrated by development

of the trade of the port and city, and whether the relationship between the two races and the working of the democratic constitution show if the inhabitants are becoming reconciled to their political and economic status.

A volume could be written on the historical claims to Danzig put forward by Poland and the counter-contents of German historians.

Danzig was founded as a German city. Its constitution was copied from that of Lübeck. Through its history from circa 1224 its Teutonic character has remained. During the period of its protectorate under the Kings of Poland its inhabitants were chiefly Prussians and Teutons. The city's archives are indisputable evidence of this fact. That the officials conducted their correspondence with foreigners in German or Latin and not Polish was to be expected, as Polish was not an international language, whereas German in those days was known throughout Central and Northern Europe, and Latin was recognised as the language of diplomacy. Official correspondence, however, even with the Polish kings and authorities, was conducted in German or Latin.

While under the suzerainty of Poland Danzig was independent in its foreign relations. It had its ambassadors and agents in the great capitals; England, France, Sweden, and other countries sent representatives to Danzig. Commercial treaties were entered into with foreign countries. Official communications are to be found in the archives from, among other

monarchs, Peter the Great, Henry VIII of England, Queen Elizabeth, Cromwell, King William III, Frederick the Great, Henry IV, and Louis XIV of France. Danzig had complete control over its port and trade. It was the chief trading port on the Baltic—a trading centre of first importance. England could not live without the Baltic, and the goodwill of the “Senate of the City and State of Danzig” was cultivated by kings and trade relations sought by the merchant magnates of all countries. Danzig was a power in the Hanseatic League. Then as now it was the main outlet to the sea from Poland, and its prosperity was due in great measure to the trade of the far-stretching hinterland, to whose kings it paid homage, and lent money, and to the closing of the Bosphorus by the Turks.

Yet in that long period Poland did not succeed in transplanting its institutions, its language, or its customs on the city, or if so, the intervening years of Prussian rule have wiped them out. At any rate, they did not find hospitable soil to take root as no trace of old time Polish influences has survived. It is true that in mediæval times, and afterwards, Danzig was an international port with a floating cosmopolitan section among its inhabitants. Traces are to be found of Scandinavian influences, and Dutch or Low Germans left monuments in domestic architecture.

Danzig had always an individuality and a character of its own. To-day it remains essentially Gothic and Teutonic. Some of the most picturesque and artistic examples of Gothic architecture are to be seen in

Danzig. The ancient Gothic Rathaus with its graceful spire and ornate decorative interior epitomises the civic grandeur of the city: the Marienkirche, begun in 1303, is one of the largest Protestant churches in Europe—another example of beautiful Gothic, enriched by the artistic work of mediæval craftsmen. Among the treasures which the famous church stores are flags and uniforms of Teutonic Knights and a picture of the Resurrection, remarkable for its beauty and its theme, which lovers of art the world over go to see.

In the old streets of Danzig one sees on every hand marks of its mediæval greatness, and it preserves indications of luxury and refinement in the old palaces of its merchant princes, which still defy the rigours of the climate, and in its markets and churches. A relic of trade which in the ancient days flowed between Danzig and this country exists in the *Englisches Haus*, which was the headquarters of English merchants at Danzig in the sixteenth century. In all this pageantry there is no material remains of Polish civilisation.

Danzig is essentially Gothic and Teutonic in its atmosphere, the typical Danziger of to-day is characteristically Prussian. He embodies the traits which are popularly attributed to the Prussian type. He is square-headed, bull-necked, a tough, hard-working fellow, accustomed to strong drink like his native spirit, Gold Water: with great force of character: stubborn and fierce in battle. He is proud of his city and of its history and is intensely patriotic. His



DANZIG: ST. MARY'S CHURCH AND FRAUENGASSE

patriotism and allegiance are first to Danzig, next to Prussia, and then to Germany. It is well to remember that these characteristics of the Danziger have a political significance.

A comparison between Danzig to-day and Danzig under the protection of Polish kings, and its bearing on the restitution claim is fallacious, since, as already explained, the territory is not identical. Besides the geographical differences there is the divergence in relationship: to-day Danzig is almost an economic and financial dependency of Poland under the super-suzerainty of the League of Nations: it retains its internal political freedom, although it has lost control of its port—the source of its life and wealth.

To prolong an exploration of the historical thesis in order to support or refute the restitution theory is a futile proceeding as the fate of Danzig was not settled with the least regard to this consideration. The Free City was established in order that Poland might have an outlet to the sea and in the firm belief that, with the vast hinterland of the new state to draw upon, its prosperity would be assured. The historical claims of Poland to restitution, even if conceded, which they were not—they were not seriously considered—would not have been a factor in the final decision, as on this issue the Peace Conference would have resorted to a plebiscite, and Danzig would have declared for Germany by 98 per cent. The Poles claim that economically Danzig is more prosperous under the present regime than it could have been under any other regime,

with the exception of complete absorption by Poland. That view was held by certain experts attached to the Peace Conference who believed that the compromise reached was bad for Poland and not good for Danzig, and considered that the resentment of Germany would be just as bitter in one case as in the other.

II : THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

WE have now to consider whether Danzig's economic interests are safeguarded under its present regime and if the system makes for local prosperity as claimed by the Poles. Danzig under Germany was favoured in the matter of shipbuilding ; it possessed the best port on the Baltic, and it drew trade from a larger hinterland than Poland controls. The lower reaches of the Vistula—more navigable then than now, and fed by the East Prussian system of waterways—carried to Danzig a large volume of waterborne traffic. Danzig, as part of Germany, was the centre of the railway administration of the neighbouring territory and the headquarters of commercial, educational, and professional organisations. The city was also the metropolis of the Corridor country and the rich agricultural lands on the East of the Vistula. Its markets have been dislocated : its old trade routes cut. Its agriculture has been badly hit by the cheaper products from Poland : and its trade injured

by Polish depreciated currency. The Danzig neighbourhood formerly specialised in breeding pedigree cattle and horses, for which there was a ready market in the rest of Germany. Now these markets are lost. The city's export trade consists chiefly of coal, timber, corn, sugar, and naphtha, and is partly in the hands of Polish firms.

Danzig reaped a glorious harvest from the export of coal from Poland during the English stoppage in 1926 and in 1927. This calamitous event for England was providential for Poland. It averted a financial crisis, it saved Upper Silesia from an industrial crisis, and some of its chief firms from insolvency: it was a blessing for Danzig. Poland, eager to capture England's oversea markets, poured coal to the coast by every avenue it could use: over German railways: via Königsberg, Stettin, Gdynia, Dirschau, and Danzig. The commodious harbour of Danzig was choked with vessels coming in with ballast and going out laden with coal for England, Scandinavia, Holland, Italy, and other places. Coal was carried from Upper Silesia to Danzig on the State railways at nominal rates, about 5s. per ton per hundred miles. Danzig harbour was congested. When I visited it in the autumn of 1926 vessels were waiting to berth: all the dock space was occupied except the landing stage at Westerplatte, which was guarded by Polish soldiers.

Poland has failed to retain more than a part of its oversea coal markets captured under purely artificial

conditions. Danzig trade, judged by export and import returns, is still good. Exports consist chiefly of coal, timber, sugar, grain, oil, etc., and imports, scrap iron for Upper Silesia, which, until 1926, was supplied by Germany, food produce, chemicals, cotton, and machinery. Twenty per cent. of the trade is carried by German bottoms.

The traffic returns are misleading, as the trade is chiefly of goods in transit. Transit trade, which is chiefly in the hands of Poles, leaves only a few pickings on the way. It does not help local business or industries. On the contrary, Danzig industries are hit by the competition from Poland with its depreciated currency, as compared with Danzig, and its cheaper labour.

Trade also suffers from import and export regulations which are subject to frequent changes : Poland is able to change not only Customs duties, but also excise regulations to suit her trade interests. There are heavy export duties and even prohibitions on Danzig goods. The result is that a number of Danzig products are cut off from the Polish market, either through monopolies or excise regulations. Industries particularly affected are the once world-famous liqueur, Danzig Gold Water, the Danzig sugar industry, sweets and chocolate, matches and tobacco. Tobacco for the Polish monopoly comes in duty free, while that which is intended for Danzig manufacturers comes under the Excise. Danzig has now established a tobacco monopoly. The Free City is also penalised by having two

currencies, one more stable than the other. The Danzig gulden is on a gold basis, but the Polish zloty is also legal tender, and in fact compulsory for railway fares on trains for destinations in Poland.

Danzig has suffered from the commercial warfare between Germany and Poland.

The Government of the Free City is very expensive, the staff of officials in the territory has doubled since 1914, and the City-State has to pay £44,000 towards the salary and office expenses of the High Commissioner. The Harbour Board is also an expensively managed body, the costs of which, if not covered by the receipts of the Harbour, fall one-half on Danzig and the other half on Poland.

Over one-third of the population of the Free City depends on the State for a living, including officials, pensioners, and unemployed. Danzig maintains a strong police force, and the swarm of armed customs officials which surround the Free City on its frontier with Prussia and also on the boundary between it and the Corridor—although in the same customs union—are also a needlessly extravagant duplicated service to which Danzig contributes.

The civil service in Danzig is recruited from Germany, and salaries are relatively high. It is considered a sacrifice for officials to be incorporated in the Danzig service as there is little opportunity for promotion. Under pressure from the League of Nations the authorities have made considerable economies in administration, but it is inevitable that the system of

government—municipal, dual, and State, the separate administration of the Port and the cost of the High Commissioner—four Governmental authorities for a community of 380,000 inhabitants—should be on an abnormal scale.

In his last budget statement Dr. Volkmann, Danzig's finance minister, said that the administration practised economy—officials had been reduced by 28 per cent.—3,000—since 1923. The total taxation *per capita* in the territory varied between 200 and 230 gulden, according to the communes, which was more than double the average taxation burdens in Germany. In 1913 the average taxation in Germany was 70.21 marks (a gulden is equal to 0.80 marks), and, “despite the impoverishment of the Danzig population, taxation has increased by more than two and a half times. This burden hampers Danzig in competition with other ports and handicaps local industry.” The Budget for 1928 did not balance, and a call was made on the sinking fund to the extent of 872,000 gulden.

The prosperity of the city depends on the port. The Harbour Commission, Poles and Danzigers, in spite of jealousies and irritation, have carried out many improvements and extensions, modernised the equipment for the rapid handling of goods. New dock accommodation is being provided as part of a large-scale programme of improvements.

The port is now capable of handling about 8,000,000 tons annually and can be further extended. Danzig is unique among ports at the mouth of big rivers. The

diversion of the Vistula supplies a dead water channel. There is no silting or flooding. The harbour is protected against storms, is perfectly safe and ice-free. The navigable channel is $9\frac{1}{2}$ metres deep and can accommodate the largest liners afloat. The water surface extends to 900 hectares—over 2,200 acres—and there is a shore line of over 30 kilometres. Alike for its dimensions, situation, and the facilities which it offers to maritime traders, Danzig is one of the first ports in the world.

III : HOW THE REGIME WORKS IN RELATION TO POLAND

THE successive High Commissioners appointed by the League of Nations—three of them English, one Italian, and one Dutch—whose duty it has been to deal with all differences between Danzig and Poland as arbiter of the first instance, have done their best to smooth out differences, which are a perpetual source of irritation, and to settle disputes which now and then flare up and threaten a rupture. In other words, they have made desperate efforts to make a seemingly impossible system work. There was one element always missing to make for peace and harmony—good will.

The Poles in their first impulsive tactics, made futile attempts at polonisation. They have given up that policy and recognise that Danzig is German and intends to remain German. A system of economic

penetration was carried out : the Poles started Polish banks and business houses, and introduced Polish clerks and officials. Success did not crown the attempt, as the invaders were not welcomed. The Poles have, however, secured a ruling that 50 per cent. of all fresh workmen taken on at the docks shall be Poles.

The inhabitants take little notice of the perpetual wrangles which keep the High Commissioner busy, but now and then capital issues are raised which excite commotion. The famous battle of the postal pillar-boxes almost led to civil war, and ended, after a long period—over a year's embittered controversy—in the complete discomfiture of the Poles. On the other hand, the Danzigers suffered a severe reverse in the capture of the Westerplatte by the Poles for a munitions depot. This is one of the longest and most exasperating disputes which has taken place between Danzig and Poland. It began in February, 1921, when the High Commissioner declined the application of Poland to establish a munitions depôt in Danzig. In June of that year an agreement was reached between the Free City and the Polish delegate at the League of Nations that an isolated site for storing munitions at some distance from the city, and not possessing extra-territorial rights, would be granted. Step by step during the next four years the controversy proceeded, the Poles steadily pursuing their objective until French influence at the League of Nations overruled the Danzig authorities, so that Westerplatte, at the mouth of the Vistula within the harbour limits of Danzig, has

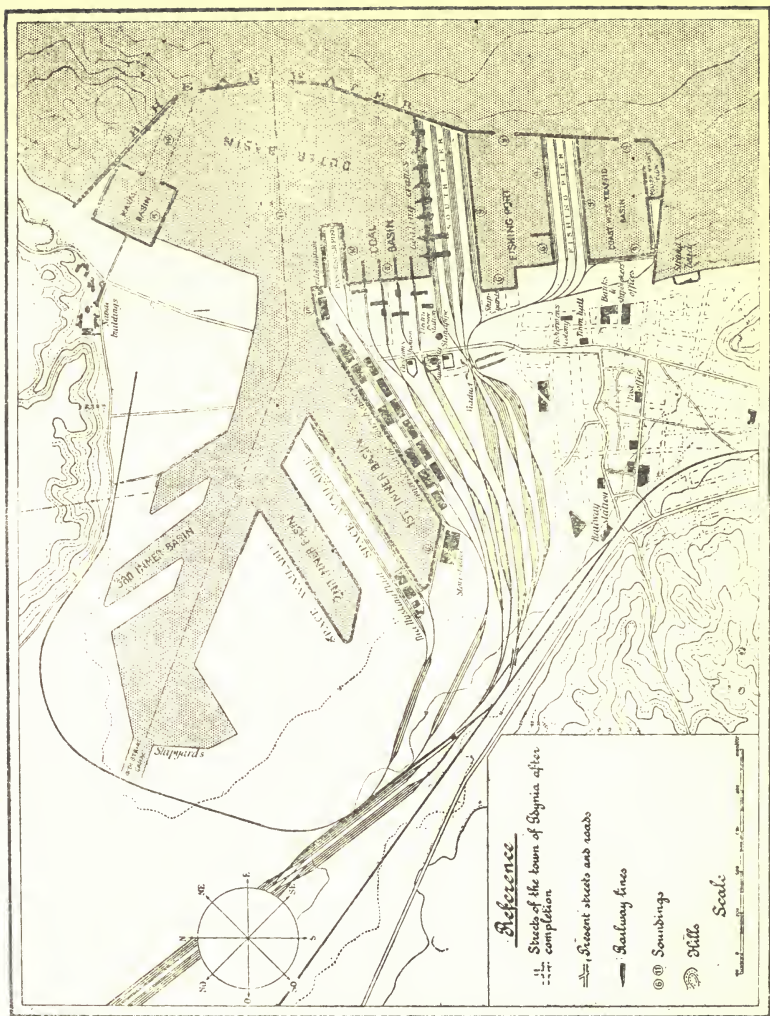
become a Polish munitions depôt, or as Danzig contends, a munitions base in charge of 88 Polish soldiers. The changes were rung between the word "depôt" and "base," although in practice they mean exactly the same thing. Danzig's territorial rights have been infringed. Westerplatte, created by ground dumped there by the city, was a residential suburb and in summer a seaside pleasure and health resort. It is now, to all intents and purposes, a bit of Poland, and a danger zone for Danzig has been created. The guard of armed men at a depôt at the mouth of the harbour are a menacing advertisement of Polish militarism. The harbour has also become a haven of refuge for the Polish navy. In stating the case, the High Commissioner in one of the numerous memoranda on the subject, summarised the situation as follows :

"(a) Polish war vessels are allowed to use and remain in Danzig harbour as a temporary measure under agreement between the Free City and Poland. They consist of some fifteen vessels with a complement of about 600 officers and men.

"(b) An area for a depot for munitions of war has been placed at the exclusive use of Poland at the entrance to the harbour of Danzig.

"(c) This area it is proposed to guard with a permanent military detachment of 88 officers and men of the Polish army."

Danzigers naturally ask the question, why their harbour and Westerplatte are required now that Poland has a grand new port and harbour only a few



The new Port of Gdynia, showing extensive nature of proposed port and harbour works.

miles away at Gdynia. The use of the new port for these purposes would help to justify its existence. Why should the Poles stay in places where they are looked upon as enemies—serving only to intensify bad feeling—when they could betake themselves to a place where they would enjoy perfect security and stimulate the patriotism and martial spirit of their fellow-citizens? As the Poles show no indication of adopting this sensible course Danzigers can only conclude that the harbour of Gdynia is not a safe refuge for war vessels in winter time, or that the Poles prefer to show Danzig outward and visible signs of their power, and keep up a policy of rubbing salt into a running sore.

The Westerplatte affair has tended to accentuate friction which has always existed between the harbour authorities and the city. A Solomon could not smooth out the jealousies, irritations, suspicions, fears, and hatreds which exist between two disparate communities. There are incessant quarrels between local and central authorities. The interests of the railways, rivers, the customs, the harbour and trade, are closely intertwined and will only work successfully by friendly co-operation.

The implication of the Allied and Associated Powers, when they allocated a share in the port of Danzig to Poland, was that it was to be the new country's sole outlet to the sea. It was represented by the Poles as being indispensable to the existence of the new State, and the Peace Conference was impressed by the

supreme justice of their claim. While sharing in the responsibility for the development of Danzig, the Poles themselves had early aspirations to build a new port in Polish territory and under their sole control. Hence the bold adventure in building a port on the virgin site at Gdynia in a bay eleven miles from Danzig and close to the western boundary of the Free City. All other Baltic ports, and indeed the chief ports of the world, have grown up at the mouths of rivers. At Gdynia there is no river : there was no means of communication, not even a railway. The shore was not an ideal site for a port : there was no deep water, and no natural protection from the sea, and the shore was ice-bound in winter. The adventurous Poles set about overcoming the handicaps of nature. They were not deterred by the colossal amount of capital which the enterprise demanded, nor by the absence of means of communication. Gdynia was in the Corridor and in Polish territory. So a French-Polish consortium undertook the seemingly impossible. The miracle of Gdynia exists. In five years a new port with docks, wharves, warehouses, modern equipment, has arisen on the sand dunes of Gdynia and has taken its place among the seaports of the world. But the port was half the enterprise. You cannot have a port without a town—usually the town precedes the port—so the mushroom city of Gdynia arose with wide boulevards, hotels, shops, business premises, residential quarters, and villas. All the public services were introduced at terrific cost—water power, light, and new institutions

—schools, churches, hospitals, palatial Government offices, etc. No city in the western prairies ever sprang into being with such rapidity or on such luxurious lines. The stupendous cost involved is without precedent. A large casual working resident population must live near the docks of every port, and Gdynia is overcoming this drawback by encouraging local industries and incurring a prodigality of expenditure in every direction which would stagger prosperous commercial nations. At an enormous expenditure Poland is now constructing a direct railway through the Corridor from Bromberg to Gdynia, scaling the high Cashubian plateau, and thus getting rid of the affront of having to pass over a section of East Prussian railways. The tonnage which passes through the port has risen from 90,000 in 1924 to 896,000 in 1927. When the present scheme is completed in 1930 the harbour will have an area of 500 acres and a quayage of 4,500 metres, and will be capable of handling annually a tonnage of 2,700,000.

These achievements are impressive. Gdynia is magnificent: it is a courageous expression of Polish nationalism: it is a demonstration in economic independence: it is a tribute to the ambition of the new State—but it is deplorably bad business. It is an artificial growth: a commercial hothouse which has to be fed with fires from an inexhaustible store of zlotys. The port charges are nominal. Vessels can coal free. Warehouse rates are trifling. While the incoming trade is encouraged by low rates, outgoing traffic is

maintained by artificial inducements. There is an orgy of subsidies for transport and other services.

Gdynia can never compete with Danzig and exist on a commercial basis. This does not mean that Gdynia will not grow to fulfil its mission. New steam lines are being organised with the help of foreign capital—including an Anglo-Polish line. Poland is creating a mercantile marine. Danzig banks have opened branches at Gdynia: new commercial houses are attracted, new industries fostered. Gdynia has taken its place on the map.

Looking at the prodigal undertaking from a plain matter-of-fact business standpoint, one is tempted to inquire why, if Poland wanted more seaport accommodation for its expanding industries, it could not have extended Danzig, which is the natural outlet for Poland, and according to representations made to the Peace Conference, the only possible outlet. Danzig could handle all the shipping which now goes to Gdynia and with extensions all demands which are likely to be made at the new port when the most ambitious plans are completed. Danzig would deal with the traffic economically and on a commercial basis, while the cost of subsidies and artificial fostering by State, preferential treatment and otherwise, must ultimately fall on the consumers and tax-payers. The truth is that Gdynia is intended to compete with Danzig and to restrict its expansion. Poland is riding two political horses. Probably it was because Poland wished to gain time in building Gdynia that the Polish



VIEW OF DANZIG, SHOWING THE TOWER OF THE TOWN HALL,
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, AND THE CRANE GATE



DANZIG :
DUTCH "STOEP" IN FRONT OF HOUSE OF PATRICIAN FAMILY

government did not give ready sympathetic support to the Danzig Harbour Commission in undertaking new extensions. It opposed the issue of loans to the harbour authorities and an appeal on the point was made to the High Commissioner in May, 1923. His decision went against the Poles. Yet Poland continued its opposition to the loan, and harbour developments were held up for a year, until, in July, 1925, the City of Danzig was able to grant a loan of 8,000 million gulden to the harbour authorities.

There are other reasons for building the new port. It is necessary as a symbol of Polish imperialism. It will be the headquarters of Poland's new mercantile marine and Poland's naval base. Poland is the third strongest military power on the Continent outside Russia, and is ambitious of becoming also a great naval power. The coast line which the navy has to defend is short, but most vulnerable and indeed indefensible, so that the navy must be big enough to act on the aggressive.

Besides developing the new port of Gdynia in competition with, or as a supplement to Danzig, the Polish Government aspired to make a third outlet for Polish coal and other products, and they established a new port at Dirschau (Tczew) which stands on the Vistula at the junction of the Free City, the Corridor, and East Prussia. Harbour facilities were increased and considerable expenditure incurred to attract trade to the new port. The original plan was to transport coal down the Vistula by means of light and shallow

craft and then to tranship it into sea-going vessels—thus avoiding Danzig. With official encouragement and help, a shipping company—the “Wisla Baltyk”—undertook the patriotic duty of seeing the scheme through. The neglected state of the Vistula, however, made river transport impracticable—a fact which was obvious before the scheme was initiated—and the cost of rail transport, even when subsidised, and of transshipment into river tugs—not into sea-going vessels—involving another transshipment at Danzig, was prohibitive. The result was that after a short life the company went into liquidation.

But the clash of interests in material things is not the main source of antagonism between Poles and Danzigers. Racial and national traits divide them into two camps. The sentiment and psychology of the Poles and Danzigers are irreconcilable.

The Poles complain that Danzig is used as a base for propaganda for Germany, and that Germany uses the Free City to keep up an agitation for territory revision. It is pointed out that the political parties in Danzig are branches of the national parties in Germany. These statements prove that Danzig remains politically, culturally, and patriotically German—part of the Reich—and is resolutely of opinion that the present anomalous and, as it thinks, indefensible regime is only provisional. The Poles regard it, on the other hand, as a permanent settlement, and the more they behave, by act and word, to sustain this thesis, the more certainly do they fire the resentment of Danzigers against it.

The Danzigers have their own politics with regard to city affairs, but internal divisions do not disturb the Teutonic solidarity against the Polish intruders.

The results of the elections for the Diet prove incontestably that in spite of the early polonising efforts of the Poles and the increasing number of Polish officials who live in Danzig, the Free City is becoming still more and more German. At the elections for the Volkstag, in November, 1920, the electorate numbered 219,149, of whom 131,516 were within the City of Danzig. The total vote given for all the German parties was 143,913, and for all the Polish parties, 9,321. In the elections held in November, 1923, while the electorate had only increased about 2,000, the German vote increased to 157,582, while the Polish vote fell to 7,212. It was reduced in every one of the four districts outside the city, while in Danzig itself the combined Polish vote decreased by 1,300 and the German vote increased by nearly 6,000.

XVI

MANY SIDED LAND PROBLEMS

THERE are four phases of the land and property problem in the annexed territories and each one has distinctive features :—

(1) The automatic transfer of State and Crown property in such territories, a process which is known as “Annulment.”

(2) The treatment of German colonists in process of acquiring their land under the law of Prussia.

(3) The expropriation of property belonging to Germans who had taken up residence in these same territories since 1908, known as “Liquidation.”

(4) Land Reform with the object of breaking up big estates and distributing the land among the peasants.

It is round land that the fierce polonising and de-germanising campaigns have centred. Land is the key which locks or opens the door to economic progress, and makes for the growth of a stable community firmly rooted to the soil. Ever since the third partition of Poland after the Napoleonic wars the stretch of territories then given to Prussia has been the scene of perpetual struggles for ascendancy and absorption between Germans and Poles.

Frederick William III, when he seized the Grand Duchy of Posen, realised that he had under his rule a hostile alien race, and issued a rescript on May 15th, 1815, in which he told the Poles that incorporation in the Monarchy did not mean that they would lose their nationality. Their religion would be respected, their ministers would receive emoluments from the State, their rights, including the use of their language, would be guaranteed, and they would live under laws which they would have a share in the making.

For fifteen years this liberal regime existed and Poles and Germans lived side by side without quarrels or jealousy. Within twenty years over 20,000 peasant freeholds were created among the Poles. About this time, however, following the Polish revolt, for which the Posen Poles were not responsible, reaction came. This again provoked a vigorous economic and cultural offensive on the part of the Poles, which ignored all subsequent efforts of conciliation and defied all attempts at repression.

In the province of Posen and the parts of the territory now in the Corridor where Poles held blocks of land, Prussia voted public money to settle German colonists. The policy was a double failure. As fair prices were paid for property, Polish owners sold to the Government and bought more land elsewhere, and the new colonists made no impression on the predominantly Polish character of the district in which they settled. Moreover, the colonisation policy only stimulated Polish nationalism in Posen and in Casubia.

Foreign students of the problem and German contemporary historians realise that while the colonising system of Frederick the Great in the Valley of the Vistula by Germans from the Low Countries and Dutchmen worked out to the permanent benefit of the community, the Bismarckian system more than a century later was more than an economic failure, it was a political misfortune. Mr. Roman Dyboski, a Polish publicist—accurately and succinctly described its consequences when he said :—

“It called forth the stubborn resistance of the Poles, and proved a school of economic organisation for the peasantry; they were guided in their endeavours by a patriotic and resolute clergy, especially after there was added the stimulus of the *Kulturkampf* against the Roman Catholic Church. Against this Polish opposition the success of German colonising efforts was admittedly small.”

Mr. Dyboski added :—

“The new Poland has exercised compulsion to remove from the land such German settlers as did not avail themselves of their right of option in favour of Polish citizenship.”¹

The way in which Poland has “exercised compulsion” is responsible for a multitude of disputes and acts of injustice. The German settlers were not given a fair opportunity to exercise their right of option to which Mr. Dyboski refers, and were sometimes obstructed

(1) “Poland and the Problem of National Minorities.” British Institute of International Affairs. Paper read on May 15th, 1923.

when they tried to do so. It would take up a large volume to give only a brief digest of the interminable proceedings which arose out of transactions over land.

Under the first heading—the transfer of State and Crown property—compulsory proceedings were not all fair dealing. Poland, when there was any doubt about the public ownership of property, gave herself the benefit of the doubt. Tenants of Crown lands were evicted and their stock and effects confiscated. Public utility undertakings were seized and the private rights of the shareholders ignored. The claims made against Poland for these predatory acts held to be illegal amount to over 1,000 million marks.

The Poles put a new definition on State ownership and claimed that land acquired from the Prussian Colonisation Commission by occupiers now included in Poland was legitimate prey. To give a veneer of legality to its policy the Polish Government passed a law on July 14th, 1920, arming itself with power to evict all tenants who could not show a full legal title to their holdings. This power was aimed at German colonists planted under the Bismarckian land schemes, which commenced in 1886, although under these schemes the land was bought in the ordinary way at the full market price. Poland also cited a law passed in 1908, empowering the Prussian Land Commission to expropriate land. This measure was opposed in both legislative Houses; moreover, it provided for full compensation. Under it only 1,656 hectares (4,090 acres) were purchased—at the rate of 2,119 marks per

hectare, although the average market price was not more than 1,800 marks. The scheme, and the Polish counter offensive between them, succeeded in redistributing land among a larger number of small owners, but the majority of these were Poles while, conversely, the bulk of the estates broken up were in German hands. An official report laid before the Prussian Diet in 1920 dealing with the administration of the colonisation scheme stated that in West Prussia and Posen 460,884 hectares had been acquired at a cost of 487,600,000 marks, of which 72.52 per cent. were acquired from German owners and 27.48 from Polish owners. Mr. W. H. Dawson, the fair-minded historian of contemporary Germany points out¹ that between 1896 and 1911 when an intensive land colonisation was in full swing there was in the provinces of Posen and West Prussia a transfer of 473,000 acres to Germans—a net gain to the Poles of 241,000 acres. The German owners who sold to the Poles who could always raise money to buy land were held to be scheming against the Fatherland, but the Polish gold did not burn holes in their pockets. On the political and social side the position of the Polish question arising out of the land warfare was tersely described by Mr. Dawson as “on the Prussian side repression, on the Polish side embitterment and exasperation; on both sides suspicion and antagonism”—a situation which exists to-day.

The Poles have no excuse for revenging themselves on Germans because of the working of the Bismarck

¹ “The Evolution of Modern Germany.”

colonisation scheme; it was a boomerang which reacted with dire consequence on its authors. At the same time, it increased the number of German landowners, although in a lesser proportion than the Poles, and Poland has proceeded to deal with these planted colonists in alienated territories.

This new action of the Poles affected a large number of German farmers who were paying for their land by instalments, but according to the Polish construction were not in full possession until payment was completed and a certificate of *Auflassung* issued. Against this class, who numbered in 1920, more than 20,000, one weapon in the Polish land grabbing armoury was aimed.

Without entering into the complicated details of the long story it may be mentioned that petitions were presented to the League of Nations and the Conference of Ambassadors against the high-handed action of the Poles. The petitions were examined by a Committee of the League at the end of 1921. The Committee reported in May, 1922, asking for more information. The Poles protested against the League's requests to postpone evictions. While the legal issue was being investigated evictions went on, the Polish authorities observing that the displaced colonists would not lose in any case, as they would receive other land in Germany. More petitions and more evictions. From the Committee and the Council the question was passed on in September, 1922, to a Committee of Jurists, who answered four legal questions. The questions were

answered to the dissatisfaction of the Poles, who held to their own interpretation of the Peace Treaty and the continued administration of their own laws. In February, 1923, M. Bourgeois, representing France at the League Council, proposed to postpone the questions. This solution was welcomed by Poland. The Council, however, referred two points to the High Court at the Hague. On September 10th, the Court decided against Poland which had, as on other issues, denied the competence of the League to interpret the Versailles Treaty. The decision was important. The High Court refused to admit Poland's plea of non-competence of the League because her action was based on her rights under the Treaty of Versailles, and said :

“If the Council ceased to be competent whenever the subject before it involved the interpretation of an international engagement, the Minorities Treaty would lose a great part of its value. The Court held that the Polish law of July 14th applied to the German minority and observed, “The reasons for this legislation, namely, the de-germanisation of Polish territories which Prussia had germanised before the War, may be comprehensible; but the Treaty of Minorities is precisely intended to prevent occurrences of this kind.”

Poland, by some strange aberration, fell back on the Armistice—an event which took place before she existed—for help, but the jurists brushed the fantastic pretension aside.

Poland next offered to compensate the evicted colonists and invented a new kind of contract—which

the League Council looked upon with suspicion. In the meantime expulsions continued and in December, 1923, Lord Cecil wanted to put an end to this nonsense by insisting that the Council should accept the Jurists' decision. A resolution declared that the evicted tenants should be reinstated. Poland declined, and was invited as an alternative to formulate a scheme for compensation. A sub-committee of three, with a British expert, Captain Phillimore, who carried out investigations on the spot, recommended the payment of a round sum and the average payment was fixed at a minimum of £220. Poland was finally cornered and began paying in July, 1926, five years after illegal evictions began.

The Polish circumlocutionists were operating other slow-motion strategy. They questioned the nationality of the colonists. This procedure affected others besides colonists, and is referred to in another chapter. It dragged on for more than four years.¹

The expropriation of property belonging to Germans who had taken up residence in the annexed territories since 1908 is another phase of the land problem. These residents received harsh treatment and did not enjoy the same measure of protection as the colonists. The usual mode of procedure in attacking the new alien whose land was preferred to his presence, was to value his property at a fraction of what it was worth and give him notice to quit.

(1) An admirable digest of the legal position and of official proceedings is given in Miss L. P. Mair's book "The Protection of Minorities."

Residents who opted for German nationality and who were property owners received short shrift. They were not in a position to obtain a fair price for their property. Moreover, a law passed in November, 1920, obliged persons emigrating to deposit a portion of their property up to 50 per cent. or more, as a guarantee that all claims of the Polish State against them would be met.

By the application of the process of "annulment," for which Poland had legal sanction, under a law passed by the Sejm on July 14th, 1920, in pursuance of Article 256 of the Treaty of Versailles, many thousands of Germans have been dispossessed of their property and have not received fair compensation, which was a necessary corollary of the treaty. The effects of the expropriation methods adopted and the harsh treatment of individuals have engendered deep-rooted ill feeling—an accentuation of the temper which Mr. Dawson described as existing before the war.

The next phase of land politics in Poland concerns post-war legislation for the break up of big estates. While Poland is essentially an agricultural country it is not predominantly a country of big estates to the same extent as were Bohemia and parts of Hungary before the war. Medium and small properties in Poland were 64.4 per cent. of the total; the smaller properties were in Congress Poland.

At the same time, it was natural that Poland should seek to satisfy the craving for land which was the universal expression of revolutionary war politics.

The first Polish Land Reform law, passed by the Sejm, July 15th, 1920, by a majority of one, when the Bolsheviks were at the gates of Warsaw, was a crude gesture to the peasants. It was amended when the politics had calmed. Between 1919 and 1924—properties covering an area of 608,219 hectares were parcelled out among the peasantry in the whole of Poland. German landlords were first to be expropriated.

The Act now in operation was passed in December, 1925, and superseded the more immature and ruthless predatory legislation. It can be said for this new Act that it is more moderate and consequently more just than similar legislation enforced in the neighbouring Czecho-Slovakia. While the object is the same—to satisfy the appetites of a land-hungry peasantry—the spoliation doctrine is less pronounced. Indeed, the preamble of the Act expressly disavows all confiscatory practice or communistic motives. Its objects are to create a new and independent peasantry and enlarge existing small holdings.

The measure has been thought out on scientific lines and well ordered machinery set up to work it. The total area destined for distribution in the whole of Poland—exclusive of Upper Silesia, to which the Act does not apply—is fixed for ten years, during which period there is an allocation of 450,000 acres every year. In less fertile areas a larger allotment of land than the standard is awarded to new tenant farmers. Applicants, in order of preference, are tenants and officials of expropriated estates,

ex-service men or their dependants, persons who have qualified in schools of agriculture and market gardening, repatriated Poles, and last of all other applicants from the area. The process of transformation has been worked out in great detail and the system of District Land Offices is well organised; the land commissioners are representative of various interests. All land is subject to expropriation on the same basis, except State and municipal property, which is exempt. There is a good deal of elasticity about the operation of the system which gives variations to suit local conditions, facilities for appeal, etc.

Theoretically, the compensation payable for land purchased compulsorily under the Act is based on the estimated value of all the property, but is subject to various deductions. In the first place the estimated value is that given for the purpose of the capital levy which was much lower than its intrinsic value. In actual practice through sundry other deductions, the compensation works out at about one-third of the actual value. Payment is not made wholly in cash, but is partly in State land bonds, interest upon which, nominally 5 per cent., may be varied by the Government from year to year.

Payment for the land by the new owner is spread over the long period of forty-one years and interest at 6 per cent. is charged while an instalment is due. Loans are granted in cases of necessity in order that the owners who are really tenants of the State may obtain possession. It is estimated that between 800

and 900 million zloty will be required to find compensation for the owners and loans for the tenants.

In theory this Agrarian Reform scheme seems to be founded on reasonable principles—granted that it is an imperative state necessary to expropriate land in this wholesale way at less than its value, but the seeming reasonableness breaks down woefully in practice. It is applied to the detriment of German owners. The Corridor, for instance, has been called upon to supply a greater proportion of the quota than Posen, although Posen, while more Polish, has a much higher percentage of big estates. In 1926 the variation worked out so that the German owners were forced to yield up 89 per cent. of the quota in the Corridor and 96.7 in Posen. In 1927 80 per cent. of the expropriated land in the Corridor was taken from Germans. A much less quantity of land was expropriated in 1927. Probably, because the State was suffering from indigestion arising out of previous hauls.

The treatment of individual proprietors only emphasises the unfair application of the law and means in effect that large estates in Polish hands are only invited to make insignificant contributions while owners of German race are cut down to the maximum.

A petition appealing against the de-germanising and unjust application of the Agrarian Reform Act was sent to the League of Nations in August, 1927.

XVII

UPPER SILESIA

I: THE CRISIS OF THE CONFERENCE

THE Corridor and Upper Silesia stand for two facets of the Eastern Frontier problem. They are closely co-related. Both territories were parts of old Prussia; there was direct communication and free interchange of commodities between them. At the Peace Conference they both provoked internal differences, but while the creation of the Corridor was pushed through without threats of a smash, the fate of Upper Silesia almost led to a break up of the Conference and a recrudescence of war.

In the early centuries of the Christian era the province oscillated between Moravia, Poland, and Bohemia. The first germanisation of the country began in the middle of the eleventh century, and the supremacy of Bohemia was recognised in 1355 when by the Treaty of Trentschin Poland renounced all claim to it. The province remained under the sway of Bohemia until the time of Frederick the Great.

Frederick the Great, by his unprovoked war—one of the most unjust which has stained the annals of history—snatched the country from Maria Theresa, but this only meant a transfer from one branch of the Teutonic family to another. It had therefore been in continuous German possession for six hundred years.

This borderland country, which was to be the subject of a plebiscite after the Great War—except a small portion which was allotted to Czecho-Slovakia and the definitely German districts in the west—had an area of 10,950 square kilometres, or 4,200 square miles, with a population of 1,932,280 in 1910, which had increased to 2,062,876 in 1919.

For centuries Upper Silesia was a country of big sporting and agricultural estates and dense forests. It was rich in minerals and metallic ores, but not until seventy years ago did the phenomenal industrial development of Upper Silesia begin. It gathered a new spurt after the Franco-German war of 1870.

It was sparsely populated in rural districts: the land was of poor quality: with the exploitation of its mineral wealth mushroom towns sprang up as in a new colony. While Upper Silesia, after the Ruhr, was the richest and most concentrated area in Germany, the inhabitants represented a lower stage of culture than any other large section of the German community. The races were inextricably mixed. The popular tongue was also a mixture, a sort of bastard Polish. The people were all taught German, yet the majority

of the working classes spoke the local Polish dialect; they were given little or no opportunity of acquiring educated Polish.

The big landlords became the big capitalists—the owners of mines, iron and smelting works, engineering works, etc. They gave their names to new towns, mines, and factories. German brains, science, skill, capital, and organisation made Upper Silesia. As it was handicapped in regard to transport as compared with the Ruhr, the Silesian industrialists were always demanding special concessions in the name of national patriotism. The province rose to the height of its industrial capacity during the war, which left its engineering works in a high state of efficiency. It grew into a complete economic unit with unequalled natural and scientifically developed resources.

Delegates at the Peace Conference, interested in the fate of Upper Silesia, foresaw an easy solution. On general principles Germany must be punished: her industrial teeth must be drawn. Here in Upper Silesia was a whole battery of industrial teeth which had proved their strength: take them away and Germany would be wounded in a vital part of her industrial organism, where a combination of coal, iron, chemicals, formed one of her strongest arsenals in her eastern industrial outpost. Ostensibly the justification for a clean cut was at hand, fitting in with the Wilsonian axiom of self-determination without the need of applying it. Had not the language statistics in the census of 1910 in a population of 2,053,000 shown



FARM-HOUSES IN LOWER VISTULA VALLEY SHOWING
CHARACTERISTIC PORCHES, RELICS OF DUTCH AND
LOW GERMAN CIVILISATION

that 1,169,000 spoke Polish and only 884,000 German? The Poles and their allies who had marked down Upper Silesia as their own rejoiced. But the Germans put in a caveat. They protested (1) that the Poles had no historical or legal claim to the country, which was admitted; (2) that it was necessary to the economic life of Germany, which was cheerfully conceded, as that was one of the strongest reasons why Germany should be deprived of it; and (3) that the inhabitants were not "indisputably Polish." This last contention was disturbing. The Germans, without questioning the results of their own census returns, pointed out that it was erroneous to assume that the majority of the inhabitants were in favour of Poland simply because they were returned as Polish-speaking. In other border and disputed territories language and ethnography were not always the deciding factors in the allocation of territory.

Mr. Lloyd George became suspicious of the proposed transfer and challenged the decision. He wanted a plebiscite. He was stubbornly opposed by President Wilson and Dr. Lord, the chief American expert on Poland, who was more Polish than the Poles. Mr. Lloyd George said that his understanding of self-determination was that of the opinion of the people themselves and not that of experts like Dr. Lord. He was simply standing by President Wilson's fourteen points and fighting them through. His persistency wore down the President's stubbornness, and made him agree to the application of his own policy.

But the British Premier had only won the preliminary heat. The struggle continued. An anomalous position arose. Members of the Conference, and their experts who were convinced that they were right and that Upper Silesia was overwhelmingly Polish continued to oppose the application of the only democratic procedure which would substantiate their case. A Special Commission of four were appointed to make provision, among other things, for holding the plebiscite, and to report to the Supreme Council.

Now began the first stage of a plan to defeat the objects of the plebiscite as the next best thing to having no plebiscite. Three of the four members of the Special Commission responsible for making the original proposals with regard to the transfer were on the Commission appointed to report to the Supreme Council; they were General Le Rond (France), chairman, Dr. Lord (United States), and the Marquis della Toretto (Italy). The fourth member was Mr. Headlam-Morley for Great Britain. The merits of the question did not interest the chairman. His object was to deprive Germany of as much industrial wealth as possible, and the justice of the arrangement had no influence on his mind. There was, after all, a risk in the plebiscite and he was against it. Dr. Lord declared that the plebiscite was a scandal and an outrage. The Italian member had less decided opinions, or none at all. To get round the decision of the Supreme Council and their instructions, the chairman proposed to exclude from the plebiscitary areas the five districts in

Upper Silesia which returned Polish members to the Reichstag. The British member opposed the proposal.

It was agreed that pending and during the plebiscite the area should be occupied by Allied troops. It was decided that the voting should be by commune—there were 1,522 communes in the area—a condition taken from the Schlesvig plebiscite regulations, introduced in that case on M. Tardieu's suggestion because he feared that otherwise there might be a majority for Germany. There was the further instruction that in recommending the new frontier between Germany and Poland regard "will be paid by the Commission to the wishes of the inhabitants as shown by the vote and to the geographical and economic conditions of the locality."

It is important to keep this last phrase in mind as a great deal turned on the interpretation given to it. Many details were discussed by the Commission, the majority always trying to modify their instructions so as to bias the plebiscite. The British member, supporting the Prime Minister's policy, only succeeded in exercising a restraining influence.

When the Commission reported to the Council of Four, President Wilson returned to his charge against a plebiscite, failing to see the glaring inconsistency of his action. It was not until Mr. Lloyd George threatened that if the Germans broke off negotiations, which he was convinced that they would do if his policy were not adopted, he would withdraw the British Army from the Continent, that he carried his point. Dr. Lord tried again to get the districts

electing Polish members to the Reichstag excluded, but Mr. Lloyd George had no difficulty in demolishing the assumption that because electors voted for Polish nationalists they were necessarily in favour of separation from Germany. He cited precedents in British experience of the existence of nationalist parties who were loyal adherents to the Empire.

II: INTRIGUE AND INSURRECTION

THE discussion over the plebiscite had created a bad atmosphere; the decision was received in a bad humour. It was regarded by France as a defeat, by Poland as a disappointment. Mr. Wilson's historian, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker, who slurs over the President's backsliding on self determination in this case, says that "the change made in the Silesian settlements was perhaps the most important of those due to British influence."

While the fate of Upper Silesia was being decided by the Supreme Council the province was in a state of disorder. Insurrections by Poles, encouraged from Warsaw, broke out, and German troops took action against the rioters. The Allied Powers intervened, and allied troops subsequently took charge—the German soldiers being withdrawn. A period of the dual allied control—civic and military—intervened between February, 1920, and the holding of the plebiscite in March, 1921.

Three commissioners were appointed to govern the territory and make arrangements for the plebiscite ; General Le Rond, chairman of the Territorial Subcommittee of the Peace Conference, and of the Commission on the Plebiscite, to which he was still opposed ; General de Marinis, a quiet Italian officer who would have been more at home in a country where there was less intrigue and faction ; and Col. Sir Harold P. P. Percival, an exceedingly capable and high-minded British officer. Colonel Percival was an expert in language and an experienced administrator. The chairman did not know German or Polish. The government of the area was largely controlled by General Le Rond and his assistants. He kept in his friends' hands the most important departments. M. Anjubault, who had been Prefect of Lille during the German occupation, assisted by twenty-one district controllers, was Director of the Interior. M. Ponsot, a former French Consul General was Deputy Commissioner and General Secretary. Although the Commission was supposed to represent the Allies, more than half the officials were French.

General Le Rond, a man of great pertinacity and industry, soon showed that he was more concerned with devising means by which the aims of France and the political ambitions of Poland would be attained, than to ensure a fair plebiscite. He and his friends encouraged the Poles in their resistance and in their insurrections. Without this encouragement it is safe to say that there would have been very little

disturbance during the interregnum between the decision to hold a plebiscite and the date of voting, and none afterwards. That interregnum of over a year was one of the blackest in the history of the Peace negotiations.

General Le Rond was generally able to get his way although sometimes in a minority. He kept in close touch with the Supreme Council in Paris on the one hand, and with the Polish insurrectionists on the other. The British officers and officials were no match for the French contingent who had been selected for their special qualifications. They included experts who were working according to a plan long since decided upon. Sir Harold Percival and his colleagues had only one object in view, and that was to see that the inhabitants of Upper Silesia obtained a square deal. They were not concerned with ulterior motives or political or economic consequences. They resolved to observe the letter and spirit of the Treaty, and the instructions of the Supreme Council, and to see, as Mr. Wilson had said, that the settlement of such a question should be upon the basis of the free will of the people immediately concerned and not upon the basis of material interest or advantage to any other nation or people. The British staff, however, soon found themselves enmeshed in an atmosphere of intrigue, duplicity, and conspiracy. They tried hard to free the administration of the Commission from the insidious influences at work to thwart it in the impartial execution of its duties.

There were 8,000 French troops in the territory, 2,000 Italians, and for the greater part of the period no British troops. A certain amount of friction and local disturbances were feared, seeing that the leaders of the Poles suffered from a great disappointment, having been promised the whole of Upper Silesia, and that the Germans rankled under a sense of injustice, feeling that they ran the risk of losing by unfair means an industrial province which they prized and considered indispensable to their national needs.

In his desire to maintain peaceful conditions as a preliminary to the plebiscite, Sir Harold Percival, proposed that the Commission should set up local police recruited in equal number from Germans and Poles. This scheme of organisation was completed early in 1920. General Le Rond obstructed it and it was not until after the second Polish insurrection that it was put into force.

This insurrection, which took place in August, 1920, was a serious blow to the authority of the Commission. It proved that it was not able to maintain order. The French troops failed to do their duty. The object of the insurrection was apparent. It was led by Mr. Adalbert Korfanty, the head of the Polish commissariat, a political party organisation who issued a call to arm in self-defence. He had been the leader of the abortive insurrection of 1919. The purpose of both insurrections was to seize the territory coveted in order to present the Supreme Council with a *fait accompli*—a policy which had succeeded in Eastern Galicia and

was afterwards to prevail in Vilna. It was estimated that at one time there were 50,000 Poles under arms in the area. Outrages and murders were committed, much property was wantonly destroyed. It was represented that the insurrection was a war of defence because of the attacks of Germans, but it appeared that the Germans had only been provoked so that the excuse of self-defence could be set up. In spite of the negative action of the French troops the insurrection failed and in the end an agreement was reached between the German and Polish leaders, which provided for the organisation of a police force on the lines originally proposed by Sir Harold Percival.

While the insurrection had failed it was recognised that it had seriously affected the prestige of the Commission. Three British district controllers and one Italian controller resigned solely on the ground that they were left powerless to carry out their duties owing to the absence of support by the troops. The British Commission proposed as the first essential for the maintenance of order and the restoration of the prestige of the Commission that Mr. Korfanty should be expelled from the plebiscitary area. It was also proposed to remove the police from the control of the military department, which was French, and place them under a department with British officers in command. The equal distribution of districts between controllers of French, Italian, and British nationality was proposed, and also that the control of the industrial area should be equally divided between the

representatives of the three nations. This scheme was put before the Conference of Ambassadors and to a large extent was adopted. It was also agreed that the majority vote on the Commission should be effective.

A long controversy raged over the proposed expulsion of Mr. Korfanty. The chairman said that if the insurgent leader were expelled there would be another insurrection : the other Commissioners held that there would be another insurrection if he were not expelled. The question of his expulsion went to the Supreme Council and was lost sight of amid the larger issues under discussion. He remained to organise another insurrection.

Mr. Korfanty failed to carry out the instructions of the Commission and disarm his followers. A member of the British Mission making a tour of inspection, came upon armed bands of Poles who were terrorising the German population. On inquiry he was informed by the leaders that they had received no instructions from Mr. Korfanty ; they confessed that they had been supplied with arms by the French. Challenged with this confession, General Le Rond did not deny it. All doubt about collusion between the French officers, whose duty it was to maintain good order and peace, and the Polish insurgents whose purpose it was to create disorder and war has been set at rest, not only by the evidence in possession of members of the Commission, but by admissions since made by Mr. Korfanty himself.

III: THE PLEBISCITE

THERE was a long tussle inside the Commission, with references to Paris on disputed points—always raised by General Le Rond—to meet Polish demands regarding the plebiscite and concerning procedure in connection with the plebiscite. The majority of the Commission were as a rule against the chairman and were supported by the Supreme Council.

Campaigning on the spot and manœuvres in Paris could not indefinitely postpone the plebiscite. It took place on March 20th, 1921, under conditions which were anything but favourable to the Germans. The dice were loaded heavily against them. By intimidation and ill-treatment many thousands of pro-Germans had been driven from the territory. The leaders were handicapped in their appeals to the electors, while the Poles made the most extravagant and seductive promises: low taxes, expropriation of the big estates, three acres and a cow to every peasant at someone else's expense, generous state insurance, etc. Nevertheless, no fewer than 98 per cent. of the electorate voted. The result of the plebiscite stultified the lack of faith shown in self-determination by the French and the Poles, and justified the fairness of British policy. Sixty per cent. of the total voters were in favour of remaining with Germany. The question, however, was not by any means settled. The decision of the people was not



DANZIG: ARMOURY

considered to be final. It had to be interpreted by the Commission. A scheme had to be presented to the Supreme Council fixing the new boundary line.

The British and Italian Commissioners in recommending the new dividing line endeavoured to follow closely the results of the plebiscite. The races were in some places so hopelessly intermixed that no clear-cut plan was possible. There were German majorities in towns with Polish majorities in the suburbs, both forming one electoral area and each economically dependent on the other. To cut up the area by communes according to the voting, would have been to make a jazz map of the province—impossible to administer or work for any purpose. The British and Italian Commissioners took into account the interests and the wishes of the inhabitants, and applied them to the greatest extent which was feasible and practicable, in a way which would disturb as little as possible the local governmental and industrial organisations of the Province. The chairman, on the other hand, was convinced that the sparsely inhabited suburbs should decide the fate of the densely inhabited cities; that one rural Pole was worth two urban Germans. He ignored the requests of the Supreme Council to take account of the “geographical and economical conditions of the locality.” Industrial districts which he did not allocate to Poland he cut up into two unworkable sections. General Le Rond’s boundary line was by a coincidence—not necessarily a strange or accidental coincidence—practically the same as that of Mr. Korfanty. The

leader of the insurgents admitted afterwards in a signed confession in his paper, *Polonia*, May 3rd, 1925, that :

“The so-called ‘Le Rond Line’ only differed from mine in trifling details. The most dangerous people were the English, who in private talks would have preferred to concede us nothing, and Italian feeling was none too friendly to us.”

Mr. Korfanty boasted that he knew what went on inside the Commission :

“I received reports from my confidential agents as to the progress of the discussion. . . . The information received showed that the attitude of the English Commissioner Percival and the Italian Commissioner de Marinis, was inflexible. If we had been forced to be content with what they adjudged to us the plebiscite in Upper Silesia would have been a crushing defeat for Poland.”

As, in fact, it was. “Reports sounded more and more pessimistic,” says Mr. Korfanty. “Only General Le Rond remained faithful to us and upheld our point of view.” Mr. Korfanty obtained copies, or ascertained the contents, of the Commission’s reports before the Supreme Council did. He, therefore, decided to act before they could reach the Council. “I was perfectly clear,” he says, “as to the necessity for armed action.” He knew that the French were unable “to render us active assistance and that the only help they could offer us was silent sympathy which they would have to keep carefully concealed from the English and the Italians.” He endeavoured to get the

news of the majority scheme circulated through a news agency. He writes :

“This was the plan of action proposed by me. I was to make use of the Berlin press to publish in the columns of its Sunday morning issue the reports of the proposals of the Inter-Allied Commission with regard to the new Polish-German frontiers. The report was to be given to Warsaw by the Berlin correspondent of the Eastern Agency and from Warsaw the Eastern Agency was to await for the final signal. The proclamations to the nation were already prepared. It only needed to set the rotary machines going. Motors were to be in readiness to carry extra editions into every corner. Public meetings and gatherings were prepared; the speakers only waited for the watchword.”

Sunday, April 30th, was the day fixed to start the revolution. The reports would reach the Supreme Council on May 2nd, and on that day a general strike of the Polish workers was to be declared. A well-thought-out conspiracy was planned : first, the premature publication of the British and Italian scheme based on the plebiscite ; then fomented dissatisfaction of the Poles at the proposed “betrayal” to be expressed by a general strike; and next the insurrection followed by the forcible annexation of the territory within the Le Rond-Korfanty line and the execution of a *coup d'état*. There were no British troops in the province to resist the insurgents, only a few Italians who were helpless in themselves. The French were to remain in

barracks, expressing "silent sympathy." The Germans were unarmed. A revolution looked easy in these conditions so that the Supreme Council would be presented by a "settlement" which would be difficult to upset. Opportunely, General Le Rond departed for Paris with his report so that he was out of the way and could not be compromised. Mr. Korfanty called his lieutenants and confederates together at the Lomnitz Hotel, Beuthen, and unfolded his plans, "emphasising that only an immediate outbreak of armed rebellion could liberate the people of Silesia and secure for Poland that which was hers by divine and human right."

There was a hitch at the first stage. Mr. Korfanty had sent an emissary to Berlin to convey the news orally, but he was detained at Breslau by the German authorities so that he reached Berlin too late. But the resourceful leader of the insurgents was equal to the emergency. He tells how he did it. Having sent his wife to Posen and betaken himself to a safer retreat than Beuthen he waited for the bomb to burst on a surprised people :

"In the towns and villages the population was thronging the streets as on a Sunday and walking about on May 1st without knowing that in twenty-four hours the bloody conflict was to begin, which would decide their fate and the political citizenship of Upper Silesia."

The Commission had been forewarned by Mr. Korfanty of the impending conflict. He had issued

proclamations in March instigating the Poles to revolt and attacks were made on people supposed to have German sympathies. Several were killed and German workers were driven across the frontier. Calls to arms were issued in the Polish press. Besides "the silent sympathy" of the French the rebels are believed to have had the active assistance of Polish troops. An English official states that "large numbers of Polish troops had been given special leave in order that they might be enabled to take part in the insurrection." On the scheduled date for battle the Polish half of the police force deserted and the other, the German half, were captured by the insurgents or detained in barracks by the French troops. Then began the last and most determined efforts of the insurrectionists to defeat the plebiscite and defy the Supreme Council. The armed rebel forces took possession of the whole country up to the Korfanty line. Not only did they benefit by the assistance of Polish troops, but they also had the support of the Polish Government. Munitions of all kinds, machine guns, field guns, hospital trains, and food trains crossed the Polish frontier to join the insurgent forces. The Polish Government made a gesture by dismissing Korfanty from his post as their representative on the Commissariat, but this did not restrict his movements so that he passed from Upper Silesia to Sosnowice and the insurgent headquarters situated on the Polish side. Calls to arms were published in the Polish newspapers. The proclamation was issued in Warsaw calling upon Polish citizens to

join the insurrectionists. The insurgents formulated their demands on May 8th after they had got a firm hold of the coveted territory. This included the organisation of rebel forces into an army of occupation, the assumption by them of railway control, and the transference of the civil administration in the territory which their forces occupied. In other words they wanted to annex by force the whole territory within what was known as the Korfanty and Le Rond lines, which hardly differed. The French troops were withdrawn from the Polish frontier and concentrated in a few towns, leaving the rest of the country free to the insurgents. They were not entirely inactive, however, as under martial law they arrested all German inhabitants in the towns who were found carrying arms or were in the streets after prohibited hours. The French troops, while they disarmed Germans, left the armed Poles alone. Germans were ejected from their official posts and the positions given to Poles. Food trains were allowed to bring relief to the Poles, and the insurgents permitted French military trains to run between the chief towns. Pressure, in the meantime, was being brought to bear on the Commission to agree to the boundary line claimed and to recognise the insurgents as the *de facto* authority. But for Sir Harold Percival's firm attitude the usurpation might have succeeded.

Lord Hardinge, as a stop-gap measure, proposed that the Polish and German Governments should take over those parts of the plebiscite area which the

Commissioners were unanimous in allotting to Germany and Poland respectively, and that the Allied military forces should restore order in the remainder of the area until a final settlement was reached. France opposed this plan at the Conference of the Ambassadors, and it was also rejected through French influence at the Allied Military Council. An offer on the part of the Germans to assist in restoring order was declined. The British Commissioner had no means locally to meet the situation and disperse the insurgents who were having a free hand in committing outrages.

The action of Mr. Lloyd George retrieved the situation. He declared in the House of Commons on May 13th that without waiting for discussion between the Governments the insurgents "tried to rush the position and to put us in the position of having to deal with a *fait accompli*"—a situation which would be "fatal to the peace of Europe," a "defiance which might lead to consequences of the most disastrous kind."

He decided to send six British battalions to Upper Silesia ; they did not arrive until the beginning of June, by which time the insurgents had committed many outrages, acts of spoliation, and been guilty of much bloodshed.

When order had been restored in the Territory a new phase in the fight for fixing the frontiers began, and was carried through in an atmosphere of prejudice, ill-feeling and suspicions. The outrages committed with the object of defeating the plebiscite by terrorism and

annexing Upper Silesia to Poland by revolution, have left ineradicable memories and colour the political situation to-day. The full record of these atrocities has not yet come to light, but the direct evidence which exists is overwhelming. Sir Harold Percival and Sir Harold Stuart, heads in turn of the British Commission, have testified to the outrages and the provocative circumstances surrounding them. Professor J. Toynbee, who was attached to the Upper Silesian Commission, states that Polish terrorism reached its climax on the day preceding the plebiscite.

“Voters from other parts of the German Reich were frequently refused admission to the polls, sometimes they were maltreated or even murdered, and houses where outvoters were staying were set on fire.”

Major R. W. Clarke, R.E., the British economic expert on the Commission, who had two and a half years experience in Upper Silesia during these critical times, in a paper read at the Royal Institute of International Affairs on April 10th, 1923, said :—

“Korfanty, that sinister and unscrupulous apostle of Polish annexation, who was directly responsible for the murder of hundreds of Germans, was in close touch with the French President and was protected by the French. The two Polish insurrections which were directed against the Commission, were not suppressed, although if the French troops had done their duty instead of remaining neutral the insurrections would not have lasted more than a few

days. German officials were maltreated, murdered, and driven away from their work.”

In an official report on the economic situation Major Clarke recorded that German officials were ill-treated and persecuted during the insurrection of August, 1920, and also in the recent insurrection of May, 1921, which lasted eight weeks, the persecution of officials was much more severe. Several were killed, many were imprisoned and ill-treated and assaults and intimidations of mining officials were of daily occurrence.

Mr. Toynee refers also to the excesses and outrages, murders, and an organised campaign of tyranny after the plebiscite which reached its climax in May, 1921, when Korfanty

“raised a well-organised Polish force which received arms and reinforcements from Poland, and also, as is now known, passive assistance from the French authorities. The arrival of more Allied troops including British, dispersed the Korfanty insurgents, but they turned themselves into footpads who plundered the countryside and tortured and murdered many defenceless Germans.”¹

At the same time that a reign of terrorism swept over Upper Silesia to hinder a fair expression of opinion or to nullify the result, an intensive bombardment was carried on from Warsaw with the object of influencing international opinion. It was directed mainly to Paris.

¹ Article on Upper Silesia in the “Encyclopædia Britannica,” thirteenth edition.

Pamphlets in several languages were broadcast from Warsaw intended to be crushing replies to German protests and equally effective replies to arguments raised by foreign observers. The Polish deputy Wierzbicki, in a weighty oration, printed at the expense of the State, demonstrated that Upper Silesia was in a parlous state and seething with incipient revolt against German rule. The interests of peace and the economic equilibrium of Europe demanded the "restoration" of the whole of Upper Silesia to Poland. Another Polish propagandist, Vincent Rzymowski, said that while the German masters had tried to "strangle the renewed stirring of Polish nationality," they only strengthened it, and it occupied impregnable fortresses in the hearts of the Upper Silesian peasant and workman. Hence, "in the interests of universal peace the question should be decided in the way the Polish population of Upper Silesia desires, for only thus can one of the most dangerous centres of war be changed into a centre of work and progress."

The Polish propagandists stress this appeal to world peace. So did the Germans. In their reply to the threat of alienating the whole territory, Germany said : "the cession of Upper Silesia to Poland is not in the interest of the remaining States of Europe, for it is certain to create new elements of discord and antagonism. A former Polish Prime Minister, Mr. Jan Kucharzewski, was equally emphatic; he produced a new argument for Paris and declared that if Poland did not get the whole province "it would deprive

France, England, and Italy of the benefits they looked for from economic relations with Russia."

In complete sympathy and understanding the various lines of attack and defence were carried on in Warsaw and in Paris, while physical force was applied on the spot.

The Inter Allied Commission were not given time to interpret the plebiscite and arrange for partition of the territory according to that interpretation, observing the Treaty condition that "regard will be paid to the wishes of the inhabitants as shown by the vote and to the geographical and economic conditions of the locality."

The object was to reverse the popular vote giving two-thirds of all the industrial wealth to Poland, over-riding the plebiscite, and it more than succeeded.

The chairman was not supported in his recommendations by his two colleagues and, resorting to his usual strategy, he went off to Paris. The result was a French note to the Committee of Experts which was intended to be a guide to the application of the plebiscite. This note began by misrepresenting the purpose of the plebiscite. It formally advanced the theory set up by General Le Rond, which he said erroneously was a principle followed by the Peace Conference, that the rural and working populations mark the national character of a country, not the urban population"—a grotesque theory which Mr. Lloyd George compelled M. Briand to abandon. Having lost on the differential vote value in one way General Le Rond and the French

note then advocated partition by commune, putting a commune of 100 inhabitants on an equality with a town of 50,000. Mr. Lloyd George had little difficulty in destroying this piece of audacious strategy.

IV: DISTORTING THE PLEBISCITE

SIR HAROLD STUART, in his report, gives the final results of the plebiscite as: "votes for Germany, 707,605; votes for Poland, 479,359; being 59.6 for Germany and 40.3 for Poland." These figures are the final official results, signed by the three commissioners.

Had the whole territory been treated as a unit, as was the case with Allenstein and Marienwerder, Upper Silesia would have been retained by Germany. Sir Harold Stuart pointed out that if the distribution of Poles and Germans had been uniform throughout the territory not a single Pole would have been allocated to Poland.

The victory of Germany was indeed staggering. The conquered was down and out. It did not seem that German citizenship carried with it rosy prospects. No one could foresee a revival of prosperity in the country. Bearing in mind that many Germans had been driven out of the province, there is one explanation of the victory: many Poles or Polish-speaking inhabitants must have voted for remaining German.

Obviously the Polish Nationalist agitation was not incompatible with German citizenship. The voting also disproved all charges that the German authorities had oppressed the Poles; otherwise, the enslaved would have jumped at the chance of shaking off their oppressors.

The result of the plebiscite was a bombshell for the Polish leaders. They were stunned. The disaster spread consternation in Paris; but the set-back was only temporary. The Peace Conference had not got rid of Upper Silesia by the application of self-determination. Another long campaign of intrigue and deception was launched in order to nullify the declaration of the people.

The extremely ticklish problem of how to give effect to the plebiscite, which the majority of the Supreme Council did not want, had to be faced, and how to circumvent self-determination worried the French and Polish delegates and their experts. It is not surprising in the circumstances that no decision was reached by the Plebiscite Commission, the Commission of Experts, or the Supreme Council. After five months of negative discussion, the question was handed over by the Supreme Council to the Council of the League of Nations. On September 1st, 1921, that Council entrusted the examination of the problem to the representatives of Belgium, Brazil, China, and Spain. The examination was purely superficial. The Commission came to a decision on October 12th, and the Council sent its recommendation to the Supreme

Council, which, in accordance with a previous agreement, accepted it. For the guidance of the Boundary Commission the League Council made certain comments and the following cryptic recommendation: The Council:—

“Recognise that solutions based on calculations of the proportion of votes would give results which would constitute an injustice for one side or the other, and it endeavoured to find a system which, when applied, would assign to each State a number of electors not differing appreciably from the total number of votes given in its favour and which would, at the same time, as far as possible, equalise and reduce the minorities.”

This sentence is a triumph of obfuscation. The language is utterly unintelligible, and thus can be made to mean anything which the person who is acting upon it wants it to mean. Electors should be assigned to the country for which they voted and not be subject to some manipulation by which majorities were equalised and minorities reduced. In order to equalise totals minorities would have to be increased.

The first attempt made to distort the plebiscite was in a French note presented to the Committee of Experts, which propounded the object of the plebiscite as being “to facilitate the acceptance by Germany of the transfer of the *whole or part of Upper Silesia to Poland* by confronting her with a wish formally expressed by her inhabitants”—a theory which is quite at variance with the intention or text of the Peace

Treaty. I have already made reference to the proposal put forward by the French that country votes should be assigned a higher electoral value than town votes. The first mention of this was made in a report by General Le Rond, who, as I have stated, justified the theory by the audacious declaration that it was a principle followed by the Peace Conference that "the rural and working population mark the national character of a country and not the urban population." Commenting on this novel theory of voting value, Sir Harold Stuart says that in practice it would have made "a village of 100 inhabitants count the same as a town with several tens of thousands for the purpose of the scrutiny of the voting"—a process by which the transfer of the whole of the province to Poland would have been facilitated.

The French general's colleagues squashed the egregious absurdity, but they did not get rid of it. It was put forward in less crude form by the French Government at the Supreme Council, and enabled Mr. Lloyd George to give M. Briand a dressing-down until that statesman felt ashamed in being the mouthpiece of such a reactionary doctrine.

Discussing the general principle applied to Upper Silesia by the League Council, Prof. H. J. Paton, who was attached to the British Mission, observes¹ that if it :
"had been applied in Poznania and West Prussia, if Polish majorities had been assigned to Germany

Paper read December 20th, 1921, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

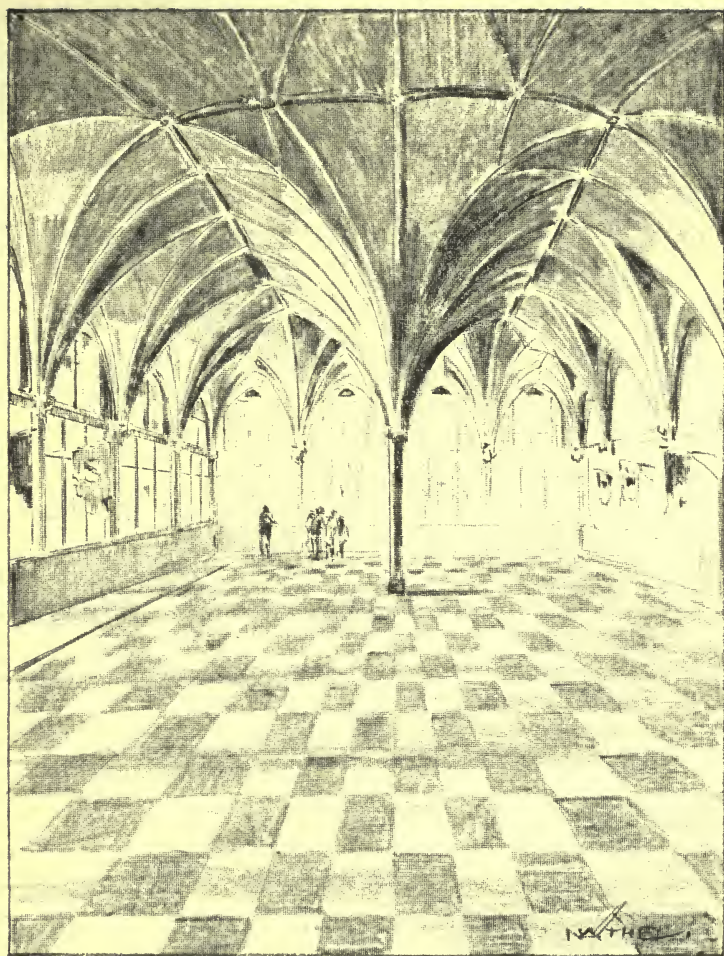
because of the large German minority spread throughout the whole country, the resulting frontier would have been very different from what it is. There might, for example, have been no Polish Corridor at all. The injustice of the Upper Silesian decision is enormously increased by the fact that a principle is here introduced, without warning, to Germany's detriment which, if applied elsewhere, would have worked to Germany's gain."

Mr. Paton also makes the significant comment :—

"The decision of the Council of the League had to be unanimous and France was a member of the Council. That I suppose is, in a nutshell, the difficulty that the Council had to face."

The big tussle on the Boundary Commission came when it had to de-limit the frontier in the industrial area—the richest and most highly developed centre in the province and the most German. The British and Italian experts held that the "Industrial Triangle," which included the towns of Kattowitz, Königshütte, and Beuthen, was "indivisible owing to the close interdependence of mines and factories, water supply, electric power and communications." Their reasoning and conclusions were opposed by the French expert. Major Clarke, the British expert, pointed out that the area was knit into a well-organised, interdependent economic unit. Its industrial wealth is described by Major Clarke as including :—

"Twenty-nine coal mines which in 1920 produced over 25 million tons with their affiliated iron and



MARIENBURG CASTLE : CHAPTER

steel works, coke ovens, with a capital value of £150,700,000.

“Coke works, chemical works for utilising by-products. Smelting works for various kinds of ores and converting it into cast and mild steel, wrought iron, zinc sheets and bars.

“Engineering works for transforming these metals into machinery and goods.

“Other works necessary for the supply of commodities required for use in the above processes. Network of pipe lines for water, electric and hydraulic power, gas, railways, tramways, canals, water supply, etc.

“The mines, works, and services were developed as integral and interdependent parts of one unit, together with all provincial and communal institutions.”

Major Clarke reported that the area reserved by the Prussian State contains many of the most valuable seams. It is noticeable in other directions that the contours of the surface boundary line had regard for the undeveloped wealth underneath.

Major Clarke summed up the case in these words :—

“A political frontier which cut off any portion of the Triangle would create economic difficulties which, in the present state of racial sentiment are insurmountable.”

Replying to the British experts' contention that the industrial area was indivisible, the French expert agreed that it included the whole area in which the exploitation of the mineral wealth had caused the

establishment and development of the industry and had imposed on the country an industrial character in substitution for an agricultural character. This admission was followed by the demand that the whole region, including the section where industry was 100 per cent. German, and in which there was an overwhelming vote in favour of Germany, should be handed over to Poland. The British experts failed. The Triangle was split up in a way which produced industrial chaos.

The dividing line cut through other parts of the territory in an equally incomprehensible way, although the serpentine twists shown on the map were necessary to incorporate into Poland some rich mine, a factory, hospital, or other institution, or undeveloped assets.

Besides the larger politics, the purpose of which was to secure Upper Silesia by hook or by crook for Poland, an inner, secret spoliation scheme was hatched. Outside the ferment which surged round momentous issues of war politics, terrific energy and resourcefulness were thrown into the tussle for the transfer of Upper Silesia to Poland; no stone was left unturned by treasure hunters. Never had there been such a rich province to sack. Major Clarke declares that :—

“The French made no secret of their interest in the mineral wealth of Upper Silesia.”

A consortium was formed in Paris to finance and work the Upper Silesian mines. He states :—

“It is noteworthy that the ink of the decision was hardly dry before it became known that a so-called

Franco-Polish company had been formed in Paris to take over and work the German state mines which by the decision became automatically the property of the Polish Government. French engineers arrived immediately to take over and work the mines, but owing to British intervention were not permitted to do so until the formal cession of the territory eight months later. Korfanty, the renegade member of the German Reichstag, the revolutionary leader of the Poles against the Commission, a man who in any other country or under other circumstances would have been shot, hanged, or deported, was given the position of President of this Company."

All parties in the conspiracy were rewarded directly or indirectly for their services. French companies were formed before the plebiscite took place in order to lay hands on the spoils. A big game of graft was played.

French and Polish commercial relations were established in anticipation of the victory. It was probably because of the existence of these ante-plebiscite agreements that the desperate and unscrupulous campaigns were started by their Polish confederates. An agreement was entered into on January 17th, 1920, another on March 1st, 1921, in regard to the leasing of the former Prussian State Mines, and a third signed by M. Briand on March 22nd, 1921. These agreements provided for raising large sums in France and for participation not only in mines, but in zinc and other

interests. (Sixty per cent. of the shares in the largest zinc company are in French hands). One of the richest plums which fell to the adventurers was the former Prussian State coal mines. A French controller was placed over this mine before the plebiscite.

In 1920 the French director of the economic department, who had a staff of engineers under his control, is reported to have concluded an agreement with Czechoslovakia for the sale of coal.

The French-Polish Society for controlling the Prussian State Mines, which Poland got for nothing,² planned well ahead, took official shape in the "Skarboferm" in February, 1922, with six Poles and six Frenchmen as directors, and M. Korfanty as President, with a French engineer in charge. The original capital was 50 million German marks, which was raised to 300 millions. Beyond money for working capital and development no capital was required. A list of the real shareholders would be an illuminating document. The property consists of several mines, coking foundry, briquet works, and its production exceeds 3,000,000 tons a year. It employs about 20,000 men.

A polonised Frenchman, Professor Arthur Benis, carried through the negotiations with the French Government. He is Professor of National Economy at Cracow University, and one of the Polish representatives on the Board of the Skarboferm.

Discussions have taken place in the Polish Sejm on the management of "Skarboferm," and in regard to the

² Except for (problematical) payments towards Reparations.

distribution of profits. One member bluntly suggested that the whole business was a bribe to the French for their activities on behalf of Poland.

V : EFFECT OF THE PARTITION

THE only general principle which was followed in fixing the new frontier seems to have been to give effect to discrimination against German interests. The arrangement proposed looked well on the map shown to the Peace Conference. Sixty per cent. of the people had voted for Germany. The method finally adopted in dividing the territory was to attribute respectively to Poland and Germany a number of votes equal—or as nearly as possibly so—to the number of votes in their favour, at the same time trying to reduce as far as possible the minorities left on each side outside the country they had voted for. The result of this formula, or rather of the method of its application, was to give Poland in the industrial area a greater percentage of inhabitants than the votes cast in favour of Poland in that area warranted. The deficit thus resulting to Germany was made up by the allocation to Germany of a correspondingly greater population—and therefore a greater Polish population—in the agricultural districts.

By this means a disproportionate share of the industrial and mineral wealth of the area was secured to

Poland. Thus, although the majority of the voters in the industrial triangle (55 per cent.) declared for Germany, the representatives of the League Council who were responsible for fixing the frontier contrived to allot to Poland fifty-three out of sixty-seven coal mines then working, which represented 77 per cent. of the total coal production ; 82.4 per cent. of the zinc production ; 72.5 per cent. of the lead production ; all the zinc and lead works ; five out of eight iron works, with twenty-one out of thirty-seven blast furnaces and 67 per cent. of the production ; nine out of fourteen rolling mills, with 72 per cent. of the production of semi-manufactured and 84 per cent. of manufactured goods ; fifteen out of twenty-five iron and steel foundries ; and the entire chemical works. In that part of the industrial area which was allotted to Poland, 163,000 votes, or 51 per cent., had been cast in favour of Germany and 160,000, or 49 per cent., in favour of Poland.¹

The delimitation of the frontier, besides dividing a district which had always been an economic unit, did something more. It cut particular establishments in two, with the result that you find the shaft of a coal mine in one country while the pits are in another ; smelting works on one side of the border and refining works on the other ; steel works and engineering works cut away from their source of electric power and separated from their administrative offices and

¹The above figures showing the partition of the industry are taken from "Silesia Revisited, 1929," by Lt.-Col. Graham Seton Hutchison (Simpkin Marshall, Ltd.).

residences of managers, etc. The area was served by a network of narrow-gauge railways ; they were cut in seventeen places. Lines had to be diverted and new roads constructed. A town was cut off from its source of water, and had to find a new supply. You cannot drive any distance without being held up by customs officers. Passengers in the tram-cars which run between Beuthen and Kattowitz, just over the border, are held up at the frontier, and must submit to a strict examination and sometimes a search. The tortuous boundary line is 371 kilometres in length. There are over fifty-two customs houses and between 400 and 500 customs officials. There are sealed customs barriers underground where the frontier line crosses the coal workings. A visitor going from the two German towns of Hindenburg and Beuthen by car finds that he has to make a detour by a new road to rejoin the direct road a few hundred yards from where he left it, as at this particular point the frontier juts out in an angle in order to bring into Poland a former German municipal hospital. Street cars are allowed to pass through the narrow stretch of Polish territory if they do not stop and the doors are kept shut.

The irritation and annoyance to passengers by this network of customs is indescribable, and the loss and delay from examining goods is incalculable. Every now and then the Poles tighten the screws ; they reduce the hours for permits to cross the line, close roads, subject passengers by tram-car to personal examination almost in public.

As farms have been divided, stock and produce which are being moved have to be taken a long detour in order to pass a customs station.

The town of Beuthen just missed the fate of its neighbour, Kattowitz, in being attached to the major portion of the industrial triangle which went to Poland, but it did not escape scathless. It suffered amputations; being deprived of one-fourth of its municipal area, one-fourth of its population, and one-third of its rates. It is closed in on three sides by twenty-three customs stations. Every day 50,000 people pass through the Beuthen customs office and during the year 20,000 tram-cars, as many motor vehicles, 10,000 horse-drawn vehicles and 4,000 trains cross the frontier within the area of the city and all are subject to examination.

The mines and metallurgical works allotted to Poland are almost entirely owned by German companies whose interests and, in some instances, even integral parts of whose works were separated by the arbitrary partition. The majority of the directors and managers of these undertakings opted for Polish nationality. They had no alternative, except the sacrifice of their business. Had the Polish authorities left them alone they would have patched up some means of economic co-operation with their kinsmen and their disrupted entities over the line. But that plan implied dependency on German organisers and directors, which did not suit the new Polish nationalism. The amputated organism was not to be eased by the soothing

balm of economic co-operation beyond the limits imposed by the Geneva Convention. The efficiency of the German industrial machines was destroyed by the imposition of Polish directors and managers who had no expert qualifications for the posts or any responsibility for capital. In this way friction was introduced into industrial concerns and production suffered.

The German undertakings and societies defended themselves vigorously against this process of polonisation. When efforts were made in the course of 1925 to commence the conversion of the Königshütte Building Society into a Polish organisation, through the introduction of motions to hold the proceedings and publish the statutes in the Polish language, they were defeated by between 160 and 165 out of 170 votes.

Harder to bear than the material loss were the exasperating and cruel moral wrongs and injustices inflicted upon the German community. It is possible enough that had the Allies transferred Upper Silesia to Poland, basing their action upon no other law than brute force, Germany would have resigned herself to the inevitable, according to historic precedent in ages when only might determined the fate of people. She would have known in her heart of hearts that she was getting the same treatment that victors in the past inflicted on their victims. But to inflict upon her the tragic farce of the plebiscite, with all its accompaniments of deceit, broken pledges, massacres, cruel

outrages, carried out in an atmosphere of political putrescence, was to add insult to injury, moral torture to robbery under arms.

The history of the so-called settlement—the concoction of a mathematical formula to fix a boundary line and its application according to political expediency—has yet to be told. Much intrigue went on behind the scenes ; only a little is yet revealed. In drawing up the recommendations of the League Council, M. Bourgeois, the veteran French statesman, took a hand and contributed the enigmatic clause to which I have referred—although how a literary Frenchman with an analytical mind and capacity of clear expression could have invented this obscure and meaningless phraseology is difficult to understand. M. Benes, the Czech Foreign Minister, although not a member of the Council, was called in to advise about territory of which he had no knowledge, and was not indisposed to interpret French behests. The result was that this major decision was reached upon imperfect information and was applied to pervert the provision in the Treaty which said, “regard will be paid to the wishes of the inhabitants as shown by the vote and to the geographical and economic conditions of the locality.” Secrecy and hidden understandings were essential to success. Mr. Lloyd George, after his triumph in defeating an outrage planned with the assent of President Wilson, and upsetting the conspiracy hatched with the connivance of the French to undo the plebiscite, had turned his mind to other

problems, but ever watchful he was quite capable of swooping down on the conspirators before the scheme was applied. He had since admitted that the League acted on wrong lines and in an atmosphere of intrigue, and that France and Poland "were passionately engaged in securing a result adverse to Germany."

The Council realised that the partition was unworkable, but tried to make amends by legislating for a portentous convention and setting up a commission which was intended to achieve the impossible, and keep the peace for fifteen years. More than half of that period is gone and every year adds emphasis to the impossibility of the "settlement."

The Convention contains about 600 clauses—almost as long as the Peace Treaty. The provisions are intended to ease the transition. They apply to : Railways (uniformity of rates, co-operation between German State Railways and Polish railways during the transition period). Water and electric power (in default of special agreement, existing arrangements to be maintained). Monetary system (German mark to remain only legal tender for fifteen years failing modification by mutual consent). Customs Regime (both countries to facilitate exports of products indispensable to industry ; natural products to cross the frontier free of duty ; this also to apply to semi-manufactured products). Products of Mines (analogous arrangements to extend for fifteen years). Other proposals dealt with labour problems, insurances, movement

between the zones and expropriation, Poland being asked to renounce the right of expropriation for a period of fifteen years. The Upper Silesian Mixed Commission, appointed to carry out these arrangements, is made up equally of Germans and Poles under a Swiss President, M. Calonder. Disputes between Germany and Poland arising from the partition and the safeguarding clauses were to be referred to the League of Nations, whose decision both Governments must undertake to accept.

With the amplitude of details—statistics, graphs, charts, maps, and data of all kinds—presented with characteristic thoroughness, the Germans through the local commercial and governmental authorities, made a powerful plea to the Supreme Council to recognise the indivisibility of Upper Silesia, upon which it was asserted the economic life of Germany depended; its possession provided the only means by which Germany could fulfil its reparation obligations. It was demonstrated that if the province was shared with Poland—still worse, if it were given to Poland—Upper Silesia would be thrown into chaos and the people suffer the direst misery. Not only would Germany lose by this revision, but so also would the Allies and the whole of Europe.

While on the one hand Germany set out to prove that it could not exist as an industrial nation without Upper Silesia and that Upper Silesia would be a devastated area if it were alienated from Germany, the Poles were equally eloquent in demonstrating the

exact contrary. Without Upper Silesia, the essential industrial base of the new State, the future of Europe was endangered. "Upper Silesia must not remain in German hands. Prussian militarism must be completely destroyed and cease to menace the civilised world." To leave Upper Silesia with Germany was perpetuating injustice, despotism, and even "imminent war."

These gloomy prognostications have not been fulfilled. There was a serious set-back to industry and social welfare owing to the all-round dislocation when the partition took place. This was inevitable. There was a rapid decline of production, particularly on the Polish side, and in 1925 the country was heading for disaster. It was on the eve of a social upheaval, seething with discontent, arising from the imminent insolvency of many of the big companies and the lack of employment. Just then the English coal stoppage brought a magical change. The miracle would not have been complete had not Pilsudski set up a strong Government and stabilised Polish currency. The simultaneity of these three factors made a quick change in the conditions in Upper Silesia.

The dismal forebodings on the part of Germans have, in a more striking degree, been falsified. The rehabilitation of Germany has been a greater miracle than even Germans could ever have contemplated. The French occupation of the Ruhr gave a phenomenal stimulus to the production of coal in German Upper Silesia, production being more than doubled between

1923 and 1927. The stabilisation of German currency was also another factor in the recovery of Germany.

While the chaos into which the industries in the portion of Upper Silesia remaining to Germany were thrown was deplorable, local leaders of industrial life took their courage in both hands and proceeded to re-organise and develop industry in all directions. They unified the coal, iron, steel, and engineering industries by organising vertical as well as horizontal cartels. What has been involved in restoring the arteries of commerce to the area will be understood when it is recalled that it was covered by an extensive network of railways covering every corner of the territory and directed towards the great trade routes of Germany. There were 1,532 kilometres of normal-gauge railways and 163 kilometres of narrow-gauge lines with 373 stations. The headquarters of this perfectly organised system of transport was Kattowitz, transferred to Poland with the industrial triangle. Germany was faced not only with the reconstruction of its disrupted railway system, but with the restoration of numerous railway stations and other buildings destroyed by the Polish insurrectionists. The following figures give an idea what this reconstruction has meant :

Laying 23,760 metres of new track ; tearing up 11,712 metres of disused track ; building fifteen new frontier stations, over 100 new buildings ; many thousands of metres of new paving ; new platforms, new water and sewage mains were laid ; sixty-five new

bridges erected ; 2,000 new dwellings built for displaced officials ; new administrative headquarters and railway workshops were built at Oppeln.

Railway reconstruction is not yet complete. New lines have to be built to communicate between Gleiwitz and the south-east corner of Upper Silesia, and a direct connection made between Beuthen and Kreuzburg, without crossing the frontier.

The Poles have had to face a similar problem to relieve the chaos of the transport system, but as they were possessed of the chief industrial centres, suffered less disturbance.

Their railway reconstruction has included two new sections to make possible the transport of goods to the Posen area and the Baltic without touching German territory.

The creation of two railway systems in place of one to serve the former unified area is only one part of the reconstruction policy which the division imposed on the community. Electricity, water, and gas supplies, hydraulic power, telephones, telegraphs, tramways; in fact, all public services, were thrown into confusion and had to be adapted or reconstructed. Roads had to undergo similar rearrangements as railways. Reconstruction has not been so successful on the Polish side.

There has, for instance, been, owing to changes in management and the break up of unified properties, a considerable decrease in the production of iron castings and rolled products, which in the year 1927 were

from 10 per cent. to 20 per cent. less than in 1913. Workmen employed in the smelting works numbered 27,718 in 1913, and 25,766 in 1927. There was also a reduction in the production of zinc blende, lead ore, zinc, and lead. In spite of the stimulus given to coal by the British coal stoppage, the relief from taxation, and favourable export railway tariffs, coal production in Polish Upper Silesia, which averaged 2,666,492 tons per month in 1913, was 2,300,970 tons monthly average in 1927. In no year during the intervening period had the pre-war output been reached. During the years 1924 and 1925 the mines were accumulating stocks, otherwise production would have been greater in 1926 and 1927.

After being disillusioned over the plebiscite the Poles were not taking the risk of consulting the misguided Upper Silesians at an early date. Instead, therefore, of fulfilling their obligations by holding communal elections when they took over the country, the Polish authorities put the towns under commission government for five years. After the lapse of that time it was hoped that the advantages of polonisation would be appreciated. The elections took place in November, 1926. The time was well chosen. The English coal stoppage had brought an unforeseen wave of prosperity to the country, and at the same time large sums became available for social welfare, and were distributed with discretion. The result of the elections was another rude shock for the Poles. The towns and the industrial areas returned an

overwhelming majority of pro-German candidates. The principal town, Kattowitz, returned thirty-four Germans and twenty-six Poles; Königshütte, Bismarckshütte, Laurahütte, and Pless, four great industrial centres, returned seventy-nine Germans and thirty-five Poles. The Poles held the suburban and rural districts. Since the plebiscite there had been a displacement of about 60,000 Germans, while as many Polish migrants had come in.

Mr. Korfanty, the leader of the insurgents before, during and after the plebiscite, declared that the results were lamentable and caused by Polish mismanagement of affairs. Writing in the Warsaw paper, the *Rzeczpospolita*, he said that the defeat was worse than the official returns showed as the lists should have included the votes cast for the "so-called Tenants Association, which is practically a German organisation, as also is the Separatists party," while the Communist votes were counted as Polish. He added:—

"I consider it a mistake to misrepresent the facts in order to produce a better impression. I wish to declare that the statement of the Woiwode (the Polish Prefect) that Polish workmen had voted for German Lists under the terror of industrialists and officials, is false and untrue. In the works at Chorzow which belong to the Polish State, and where only Polish industrialists and officials are in office, 70 per cent. of the workmen have voted for Germany."

The authorities were equal to this new demonstration of democratic opinion. The elected Council of the chief offender, Kattowitz, was suppressed and one with an official majority appointed. The elections at Rybnika were also declared null and void. New elections were ordered six months later and despite terrorism and the maltreatment of pro-German voters, the party only lost four seats.

A census of the population was arranged for December 31st, 1925, but an announcement published by the Ministry of the Interior on December 30th, after a preliminary count had been made in one or two places, postponed the census indefinitely, since which nothing further has been heard of it.

A general election for the National Sejm, which took place in March, 1928, was well prepared by gerrymandering the electoral areas and putting obstacles in the way of registration of voters. Police certificates, which were necessary, were sometimes very difficult to obtain. The Germans in Upper Silesia again showed a considerable increase over the figures for 1922, although a slight decline had taken place since the communal elections.

The defeat of the Government party was due to the internal divisions amongst the Poles. Mr. Korfanty, for instance, ran a ticket of his own and polled over 50 per cent. of the Government vote in the big industrial centres. The Communists and the Social Democrats were not organised on racial lines.

VI: MINORITIES AND SCHOOLS IN UPPER SILESIA

OF all the bitterness which controversial questions have called forth in the Press and in the pulpit, in public and social organisations, nothing has exceeded the fierce turmoil which has raged round the schools. The children have been the pawns in the racial political game. They are the victims of germanising and polonising politics. Articles 97—133 of the Geneva Convention are intended to provide for every emergency, but did not reckon with the capacity of human beings for ingenuity, chicanery, deceit, and illegality. The issues are complicated in any case, because of the close intermixture of the races, the acceptance of language and religion as decisive factors in nationality, the unchristian attitude of one section of the Roman Catholic community towards another for nationalistic reasons, the distinction between German Catholics and Protestants, the provision for private primary and secondary schools, and the engagement of teachers—the governmental authorities have the power of appointment and dismissal of the teaching staffs. Examples can also be given of differential treatment even in regard to transport for children to and from school.

Looking over the detailed records of controversies the most deplorable fact that emerges is the loss of school time in the attempts to teach children in a language which they do not understand. Children in

Polish Upper Silesia are being well schooled in one gospel—the gospel of racial hatred. The little German and the little Pole are taught to look upon each other as hateful creatures in the eyes of God and man.

There are two school questions in former German territory, (1) as affecting Upper Silesia, and (2) as it applies to the Corridor and other territory. In Upper Silesia, where the population is mixed, there have been interminable disputes—the Polish authorities always trying, by various subterfuges and procrastinations, to dodge the Convention.

Articles 97-133 of the Convention provide for a bi-lateral obligation in regard to elementary, intermediate and private schools. The underlying principle is that minority schools must be established at the request of a certain number of parents or legal guardians. There have been each year an increasing number of applications for schools and classes in Polish Upper Silesia, and a declining number on behalf of Polish children in German Upper Silesia.

In Polish Upper Silesia there were in 1928 84 German elementary schools maintained by the State in 64 communes. These schools contained 389 classes, instructed by 350 teachers, and were attended by roughly 20,000 children. Of the teachers about 300 were Germans. The remainder were Poles by race. Of the 84 headmasters, only 21 were Germans. The school inspectors were all Poles, and also members of the authorities responsible for the administration of education in Polish Upper Silesia.



DANZIG : ST. MARY'S CHURCH



MARIENWERDER, WITH CASTLE

The chief grievance of the German community, besides the fact that the children awaiting admission are greatly in excess of the accommodation available, is that many teachers who impart tuition in the German language are dismissed and the schools forced to engage Poles with an imperfect knowledge of the German language. This action is a breach of treaty obligation and has led to an appeal to Geneva.

It would be tedious to cite the numerous petty devices resorted to, the net effect of which has been to exasperate parents and sacrifice the education of the children. The sort of thing which has happened is well illustrated by a concrete example—one of many.

Mr. Calonder, the President of the Mixed Commission, gave his decision in this particular case on October 12th, 1927. It referred to a complaint lodged at the Polish Minority Bureau at Kattowitz on September 8th, 1926, concerning the failure to provide a Minority school at Gieraltowice.

In November, 1925, applications were made on behalf of forty-four children for a Minority school at this place. The Communal Vestry heard the applications in June, 1926. The persons responsible—parents or guardians—for the children's education had to state the mother tongue of their children and also whether they wished the children to attend a German or Polish school. The authorities declared that only four applications were valid, "for the reason that the children did not belong to the German linguistic minority." Consequently, as there can be no Minority school unless

there are forty applications entertained, the children would have been obliged to have attended the Polish school. The authorities, however, exercised pressure, to quote the President, "in the direction of dropping the application for the erection of any Minority school inasmuch as for years the Minorities have been conducting a continuous campaign on the question of the Minority school."

The President proceeded :—

"The next question which arises is whether applications lodged in virtue of Article 106 of the Geneva Convention could be declared non-valid because the parties responsible for the children's education had, at their hearing, declared that the mother tongue of their children was Polish."

The President said that the declaration was not non-valid according to Articles 74 and 131 of the Convention.

"Just as every citizen may freely determine whether he will belong to the majority or to the minority, just so every party responsible for the child's education has the right, in virtue of Article 131, to determine subjectively whether, in respect to school education, the language of his children shall be that of the minority, i.e., whether his children belong to the linguistic minority."

The President pointed out that the Governor or Voivode was wrong, which he subsequently admitted he was, in issuing certain ordinances in 1922, 1923, and 1924, concerning the form of applications with the

object of superseding the provisions of the Convention. The net result of this case was that the President ordered a Minority school to be created without delay, that children who had been placed in other schools should be transferred to the new school, and that the teaching should be in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

Here we have an epitome of the Upper Silesian School problem :

1. Failure on the part of the Polish local authorities to provide a Minority school.

2. Attempt to defeat the application for the school by declaring them to be non-valid.

3. Ordinances issued by the Governor to facilitate non-validity of applications contrary to the Convention.

4. Policy of procrastination in the hope that parents will weary at the delay and allow their children to go to a Polish school rather than no school.

5. Precaution which it is necessary to take to guarantee that competent teachers of German will be appointed when the German Minority school is established.

6. The revelation that children whose mother tongue is Polish are being sent to a German Minority school.

Another characteristic example of the Polish violation of the Geneva Convention may be mentioned.

In May and June, 1926, applications were entered for German Minority schools in respect of nearly 9,000 children. The Education Department of the Voivody now ordered, against Article 131 of the Geneva

Convention, an examination of the applications and declared over 7,000 to be invalid. Parents who refused to send their children to Polish schools were prosecuted and fined. The Deutscher Volksbund thereupon appealed to the President of the Mixed Commission, who, after investigation, declared on December 15th, 1926, that the scrutiny of the declarations had been illegal, and that the children in question, with a few exceptions, where the declarations showed material or formal deficiencies, were to be allocated to the Minority schools, and further, that the prosecution of parents was unjustified. The Polish Voivode's Department rejected this decision, and the Deutscher Volksbund appealed to the League of Nations. At the session of the League Council held in March, 1927, a compromise was adopted, whereby Poland was to admit the greater number of the children to Minority schools, and suspend the judgments pronounced against the parents, while in the case of a number of children, a Swiss educational expert was to decide whether, from a pedagogic point of view, the children would be more appropriately allocated to German schools. Up to May 1st, the Polish authorities had not admitted one single child to the German schools ; on the other hand, 638 further summonses had been issued against, and fines inflicted upon, recalcitrant parents. In November, the German Government complained on the ground that the inquiry was being extended to new applications. In December the question was again examined by the Council and referred to the Permanent Court at the Hague.

In May, 1927, the Polish authorities dismissed, within a few days, twelve German intermediate-school teachers—more than half of the German secondary-school teachers with academic training in Polish Upper Silesia. If the Poles succeed in maintaining this action, in defiance of treaty obligations, the schools will be obliged to appoint Polish teachers in their place—which, of course, is the object aimed at.

The Poles in their school policy are fighting against the germanising of children whose parents are Poles by race and language. The reason why Polish-speaking parents seek the admission of their children to German Minority schools is that these schools are more efficient than the similar Polish schools. The Poles, to counteract that tendency, seek to replace teachers by Polish teachers, who are less capable to give efficient instruction in the German language.

A few years ago terrorist tactics were adopted. The Kattowitz branch of the Westmarkenverein—an association of Polish insurgents—issued on August 20th, 1925, a notice declaring that people who send their children to German Minority schools “will be refused admission to any Polish association or club,” and “the children will find difficulty in earning a living in Poland.” All these inquiries and local disputes tend to undermine the efficiency of the educational system. The children are the victims of racial animosities. If the Polish official authorities and racial propagandists were to direct their energies towards raising the standard of instruction in their schools and frankly

recognise that Upper Silesia is a bilingual country inhabited by two races who must live together and should be efficient in both languages, they would introduce a new Polish spirit, and teach children to grow up with a feeling that there is a brotherhood in humanity. But the Polish educational commandment is to hate your neighbour and train up your neighbour's children to hate each other.

The Poles also charge the Germans with failing to carry out the provisions in their Constitution in regard to the provision of educational and language facilities for Polish minorities. The Polish minorities—apart from Upper Silesia, where education and language are regulated by the Convention—are found near the Corridor and in the districts of Stuhm and Allenstein in East Prussia. It is stated ¹that there are in Allenstein approximately 6,678 Polish children, and 9,813 Masures whose maternal language is Polish, that for four years the authorities did their best to ignore the provision of Minority schools, and that last year only 1.7 per cent. of the Polish children were taught to read and write Polish, and if the bilingual Masures were added only 4.3 per cent. In Prussian Pomerania there are no schools for Polish children. In the residue of West Prussia and Posen, the so-called "Grenzmark," or Marches, there are 2,242 Polish children and only half of them—1,137—were given tuition in Polish in seventeen schools. The main charge of the Poles is that not only are their children not given exclusively

¹ Les Questions Minoritaires (Polish Review) November, 1928.

Polish schools, but they do not even receive adequate teaching in Polish in German schools.

Complaints are also made that the Polish primary schools in German Upper Silesia are unequal to the demands of parents and the Convention requirements in regard to secondary and professional schools are not fulfilled. At the same time, the appeals made to the Mixed Commission from the German side of the province are proportionately fewer.

The Poles carry their demands for instruction in Polish to the children of their compatriots who live in Westphalia, in Hamburg, Berlin, and other places in Germany. But a country is not under any obligation to recognise the maternal language of non-nationals who reside as colonists or temporary residents. Poles who settle in America in large numbers and in special centres are only taught the language of the country. Nevertheless, the Prussian State Government has recently published a decree conferring on linguistic minorities in Prussia—other than in Upper Silesia, where the Geneva Convention operates—all the privileges in regard to schools laid down in the Minority Treaties, to which, of course, Germany was not required to subscribe.

VII: THE CONVENTION AT WORK

THE Geneva Convention, as an instrument to keep the peace between rival factions and conflicting interests—always seeking fresh opportunities for strife

and deliberately creating them if they do not happen—has worked better than was anticipated outside the League of Nations. This result is due to the tact shown by the president, Mr. Calonder, his frank recognition of insuperable difficulties and his resolve by adjustments and compromises to make the best of a thoroughly bad situation. He is in the position of a judge or arbitrator ; his Polish and German colleagues on the Commission usually counteract each other.

The question which causes most irritation on the part of the Germans is polonisation. There is nothing in the Convention to prohibit peaceful polonisation, and although pressure to replace Germans by Poles in administrative offices and businesses is barred, there is still a veneer of legality about it, as the law can give authorities power to nominate Polish officials of institutions and directors of companies.

There was a quick transfer of managers and engineers of mining and manufacturing companies. Poles took the place of Germans who had been forced to resign or had retired. It was given out that the change was expected and the authorities could make things less comfortable for those who did not conform to official expectations. The demands were in some cases very exacting. All the chief engineers and managers of big coal and iron undertakings had to be Poles, and Poles must be added to the directorates of the owning companies. There has been a considerable amount of discrimination used in making these changes ; Germans who opted for Poland were

accepted grudgingly and suspiciously perhaps, but they were within their rights. As 90 to 99 per cent. of the leaders in industry and the owners of property, including the large landed estates, were Germans or germanised Poles, there was necessarily a wholesale option for Polish citizenship on the part of those who possessed the residential qualification (1908). Many Germans were torn between two interests—cultural and material. It was vital to their material welfare that they should remain in alienated territory where the manufactures which they had built up through years of organisation were situated, yet it meant treating their kinsmen across the new arbitrary frontier—with whom they had not only close business associations, but affiliations in all walks of life—as foreigners.

During the long strife before and after the plebiscite period, there was intense bitterness. It affected the Church. Polish priests preached the gospel of unbrotherliness against the Germans holding the same faith. Acute unchristian and uncharitable feelings reached a stage unequalled between Protestants and Roman Catholics. The intervention of Rome had to be sought to subdue the internecine warfare of tongues. It was a case of language more than anything else. It was impressed on the ignorant Polish workman and peasant that the only true medium for the teaching of God's word was the Polish language. There has been throughout the annexed German territories an attempt to spread the gospel of religious discord for political ends. Politicians and propagandists have spread the idea

which takes root in simple minds that the only genuine true Roman Catholics must be Poles : that there is something spurious and suspicious about the German Roman Catholic. The German Catholic community have formed associations and held conventions with the object of dispelling this monstrous heresy.

The Germans were not blameless for the ignorance which is played upon. They had failed to educate the poor population of Upper Silesia to the same level of workers in other parts of Germany. They had not recognised that Upper Silesia was a bi-lingual country and had not given facilities for the teaching of Polish. Their good works in other directions saved them from a hostile vote.

There is no freedom of the Press in Upper Silesia. Journals in the German language are censored and suppressed ; editors imprisoned for defending the legal and legitimate rights of the Minorities. Journalism as the only vehicle through which the Germans in Upper Silesia can make their opinions known must march warily, in blinkers or in chains. It is not a question of subversive propaganda or high treason. Attacks on the administration are not tolerated and criticism must be restrained. One paper, the *Kattowitzer Zeitung*, has been prosecuted hundreds of times, and the *Oberschlesische Kurier* confiscated almost as frequently. Editors are also imprisoned. Papers in the Polish language do not escape the attention of the authorities, although they are dealt with less severely.

Germans in Upper Silesia share the fate of their compatriots in other parts of annexed territory and are expelled. Deportations are regulated under the Convention, and for a short period a friendly understanding was reached between the provincial authorities. After the German success at the communal elections in 1926, the Polish Voivode, or Governor, resorted again to expulsion for inadequate reasons. This I deal with more fully in the next chapter.

XVIII

MINORITY PROBLEMS

OBLIGATIONS under the Minority Treaties are the same in Poland as in other Central European States, and their execution is just as partial.

The object of the governing authorities is to deprive minorities of the protective rights and privileges to which they are entitled. When complaints are lodged, delays follow. Owing to the absence of quick-moving machinery and impartial jurisdiction, minority grievances will never be redressed. Appeals to the League of Nations lead to intolerable delays. Until new authorities are set up to deal with minority treaty rights, the questions will never be settled.

Minority obligations are ignored in regard to religion, as well as education and other questions affecting the welfare of the people.

The religious question is accentuated in Poland, because of the racial antagonism between the Polish and German Roman Catholics and the existence of large Protestant communities. In all churches frequented by Germans, the service should be in the

German language. An agitation has been carried on against German Roman Catholic canons and clergy as part of a de-germanising policy. Some of them have been deported. Clergymen who take part in the political life of their kinsmen must take the consequences. There are two phases of the policy : the more docile clergy are polonised, the racial loyalists are penalised.

The Protestants, whom the Poles regard as heretics, receive more attention. The Government began by looking upon the United Protestant Church in the alienated territory as a dangerous body and in time of political excitement they have been the victims of their faith.

Institutions belonging to religious minorities have been liquidated, including charitable institutions, schools and hospitals.

The Minority problem even persists where minorities are fewer.

De-germanisation proceedings have been carried on which are outside the provisions of Minority Treaties. Occupational restrictions have been imposed which prevent German citizens from following professions under which, for example, many German doctors lost their practice. Licences were also refused to German chemists, and Germans were debarred from pursuing other occupations as diverse as the dignified calling of hotel keeper and the humble occupation of chimney sweeper. In 1927, licences for the sale of alcohol were withdrawn from seven Germans, including a family

hotel keeper at Graudenz. This policy of de-germanisation is general, and is deemed by the Poles to be necessary to safeguard the life of the Polish State.

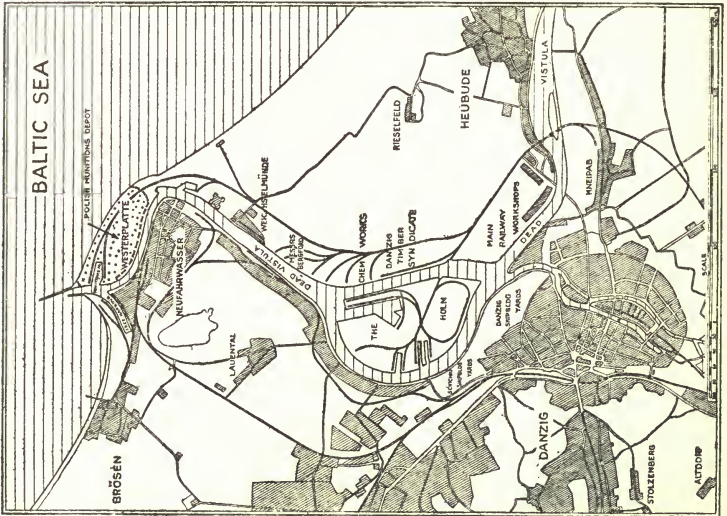
The Polish Government, by its electoral laws, consolidated the minorities against the majority. These laws made the number of members elected to the Sejm depend on mandates allotted at the local elections. This arrangement was bound to be detrimental to parties, such as the German and Jewish, which were scattered throughout the country. The demarcation of the constituencies showed the same tendency. Thus, in the western districts, where German minorities were present, the circles received four to six mandates, while in East Galicia they received nine to ten, so that in these preponderantly Ukrainian districts the Polish minority also obtained mandates. The number of inhabitants represented by each member is considerably lower in the Polish circles, or districts, than in those where minorities predominate. The law relating to the election of senators is analogous.

The effect of this legislation was to weld the minorities, despite their diverse nationalities, their social and cultural, and religious differences, into a bloc.

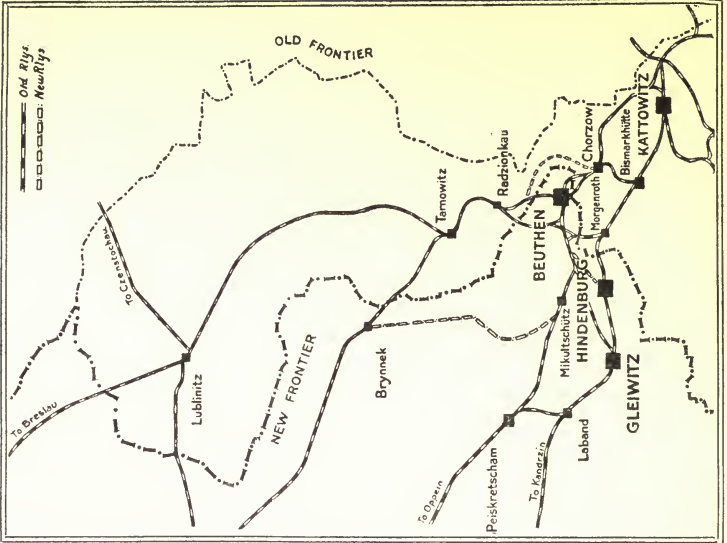
Fair treatment to each minority would have split them into divergent units.

Minority grievances are innumerable. The application of the treaty depends on its interpretation: and there are many loopholes.

A German resident in annexed territory before 1908 should automatically become a Polish citizen. But



The Port of Danzig



Upper Silesia : Railways cut by New Frontier.

there are conditions. Residence must have been continuous. If the German domiciled in the new Poland was not deemed desirable for political or other reasons, it would be discovered that he spent the winter in Berlin, or children attended schools away from the parental abode, or sons served in the army in other parts of Germany, and these and other reasons were sufficient excuse for the authorities to decline citizenship. A birth qualification was not deemed to be an adequate claim for citizenship. Such questions arose as : Were both parents resident in Polish territory at the time of the birth of the applicant ? Did one parent die before the date of the Treaty, January 10th, 1920 ?

The arbitrary interpretation of Clause 4 of the Treaty, referring to citizenship by birth, by Poland led to the expulsion of many applicants and led to an appeal by the German League to the League of Nations on November 12th, 1921. Before an agreement was reached, late in the autumn of 1922, the League Council appointed a Commission of Jurists to decide the dispute. The members were : Botella (Spain), Fromageot (France), Cecil Hurst (England), and Van Hamel, the head of the legal section. As the finding of this Commission went against Poland, the Polish Government refused to accept it and challenged the competence of the League.

Meanwhile in the autumn of 1922 direct negotiations had commenced at Dresden between the German and Polish Governments. The League at first awaited the

result of these negotiations, but when it became evident that there was no prospect of agreement the League Council submitted the questions of its competence and of the interpretation of Article 4 to the Permanent Court at the Hague. The Hague decision, which was given on September 15th, 1923, found that the Polish construction was contrary to the provisions which it professed to interpret and was unsupported by any precedent in international practice.

Article 4 of the Minority Treaty referred only to the place of residence of the parents at the time of the birth of the applicant. To impose a new condition on the acquirement of Polish citizenship was not construction but revision of the Treaty.

Article 4 of the Minority Treaty was only one of a number of disputed citizenship questions. Negotiations between Germany and Poland on the whole complex of questions were continued. At the commencement of 1924 discussions took place at Geneva with regard to citizenship, and at Warsaw with regard to questions relating to option. The League offered its intermediation and effected a renewal of the discussions between the two parties under the chairmanship of M. Kaeckenbeeck, President of the Upper Silesian Mixed Court of Arbitration, who was to act as arbiter in case of non-agreement. These negotiations took place at Vienna between April 30th and August 30th, 1924, and culminated in the Vienna agreement, which was concluded on the basis of an arbitral award by the president. These negotiations again

demonstrated how resolutely the Poles were working for the elimination of the German element in Poland.

In questions of citizenship, the Vienna agreement upheld the German thesis. There were two theoretical innovations, which were of little practical consequence. The residence qualification was now to imply uninterrupted residence from January 1st, 1908, to January 10th, 1920, but the term interruption was defined. In the case of persons born in Polish territory, Polish citizenship lapsed where the subjects manifestly had no intention of exercising it.

Despite the efforts of the German negotiators, no provision was made in the agreement for a court of arbitration. Contestable questions were certain to arise, but the Poles openly declared that the ratification of the Treaty would be jeopardised if such a provision were included. It is significant that the Poles should have been so apprehensive of an impartial court of arbitration that they threatened to sabotage the Accord. In less than two years several hundred disputes had arisen out of the Agreement.

At the beginning of 1927, after strenuous efforts, the German Government succeeded in inducing Poland to submit these disputes to a Mixed Court of Arbitration. Poland, however, still refused to agree to the appointment of a neutral president. Consequently the greater part of the controversial questions remained undecided.

While League of Nations Committees, jurists, statesmen, governments, were discussing, Poland was

acting ; refusing citizenship on its own interpretation of the clauses which were the subject of negotiation and expelling the applicants. Such action was characteristic.

A somewhat similar controversy took place over the optional clauses in the Treaty of Versailles. Under Article 91, the right of option was accorded to German subjects living in territories ceded to Poland, and could be exercised reciprocally by persons over 18 years of age up to January, 1922.

The two States should have reached an agreement on the way in which the right of option should be exercised as the Treaty contained no directions, but negotiations were fruitless and the two States issued separate regulations, the result being misunderstandings and disputes. The number of optants on each side ran into more than a hundred thousand.

Disputes arose through the construction of the Treaty, on the legality of option declarations. German optants who had left Poland temporarily were refused re-admittance ; they could not visit their relatives without forfeiting their right of domicile and in many cases losing their livelihood.

The deportation of persons who lived under permits in either Germany or Poland was practised to a larger extent in the years 1923 and 1924, than more recently. The old Prussian decree, which provided that foreigners could be refused permission to stay in fortified zones, gave the Poles legal justification for deporting any one whose job or house was wanted by a

Pole. Poland alleged that many of the deportations were simply reprisals against the treatment of Poles in Germany, but this reason was investigated. Certain it is that the Poles showed discrimination in their selection of undesirables ; they chose clergymen, professional men and industrialists. Negotiations, of course, took place as usual to arrive at a mutual understanding ; as usual nothing happened.

It was thought that, with regard to Upper Silesia, the comprehensive Geneva Convention closed all doors for illegal deportation. It was supplemented by an agreement entered into by the German Provincial Government at Oppeln and the Voivode's Department at Kattowitz, but the reaction which followed the communal elections in November, 1926, caused a recurrence of the practice.

In February, 1927, the deportation of four prominent German industrial managers from Upper Silesia, led the German Government to break off negotiations for the conclusion of a Commercial Treaty with Poland. The four expulsions were merely a link in a long chain of anti-German measures which were becoming all the more intolerable since negotiations, with regard to domicile, were in progress ; they were, moreover, particularly flagrant, since the sole reason advanced was that the Poles wished to appoint Polish managers in their place.

XIX

THE CONSEQUENCES AND THE FUTURE

SMOULDERING embers lie scattered along the new Eastern frontiers. At any moment they might burst into flame as a result of an incident or an accident in the political and racial warfare which is always latent, and sometimes active, in these unstable regions. It demands the tact of the diplomatist, the patience of the statesman, and the sagacity of the jurist, to keep the menacing forces in restraint.

These perils to the peace of Europe are legacies from the Treaty of Versailles. It was realised at the time that the Eastern settlements reached were no solutions ; did not contain the basic elements of permanency ; were compromises which satisfied no one ; opportunist patchwork which gave peace just a speculative chance.

The statesmen of Versailles, aware of the weaknesses of their handiwork, originated what they regarded as adequate safeguards to protect it, and efficient machinery to readjust differences by peaceful means : they accompanied the Peace Treaty with treaties containing guarantees for the protection of minorities in regard to language, education, religion, cultural institutions, economic welfare, so that minorities might enjoy

liberty within the State to which they were transferred and at the same time retain their own racial characteristics.

These new instruments symbolised a portentous innovation in international relationship which their authors thought would have an enduring pacifying effect. Writing to Mr. Paderewski, the representative of Poland, on June 24th, 1919, M. Clemenceau explained the humanitarian object of the Minority Treaty which Poland was asked to sign. The Treaty guaranteed the rights of minorities "in the most permanent solid form." Earlier attempts to achieve this object had failed because they were unaccompanied by the necessary guarantee which would now be supplied by the League of Nations. That international authority was intended to lift the question out of range of interference by individual States.

I: THE MENACE OF MINORITY TREATIES

IN the affairs of everyday life the main cause of irritation, perpetuation of racial antipathy, jealousies, fears, and hatreds, turns round the treatment of minorities by the dominating and governing races. The peacemakers knew very well that their desire to transfer large slices of territory from undemocratic empires, which had ruled by the right of conquest and the might of centralised power, to their subject races—raised into

new self-governing communities—carried with it grave dangers for the future—the temptation for revenge, the outburst of the human weakness of the bottom dog, free from the leash, and exulting with pride in a new and intensive nationalism. Hence Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and other newly constituted States had, as an accompaniment of their own freedom, to sign treaties for the protection of minority races in their midst. They were to be restrained by these international instruments from exercising their brute instincts ; from doing unto others what others, without similar restraining legal bonds, had done unto them. To the League of Nations was given the duty of seeing that these minority treaties were justly enforced.

It is a shamefully notorious fact that the minority treaties have not been carried out by any State either according to the letter or the spirit. Minority races are, in many cases, far worse off than in the time when they had no protection by treaties or international authority. The League of Nations has failed to fulfil this part of its accepted functions. One cannot either hold it blameless or condemn it as wholly guilty. Its failure was inevitable. Its procedure was wrong. Minority grievances have been treated as political questions rather than as judicial questions. Flagrant breaches of minority rights have not been considered according to the legal interpretation of treaties : they have been judged from a political standpoint by the State responsible for the alleged miscarriage of international justice. States at Geneva are lined up in

groups ; political affinities and military alliances override the tenets of international justice. One vote at the League Council of a recalcitrant or interested—directly or indirectly—member makes decisions inoperative. Petitions to the League from minorities are held up for inexcusably long periods while they are contested and recontested, referred back and forward, from one authority to another, before a decision is reached. Original grievances about which the petition was lodged may disappear before a final decision is given either by the consummation of the injustice which was feared, or the infliction of greater wrongs. Procrastination has found favour instead of quick action. The way in which petitions have been ignored or the settlement of just grievances postponed, has aggravated the offence. Instead of the treaties having, as intended, a pacifying effect they have exasperated minorities, caused bitterness and strife between governments.

Minority grievances sometimes reach the Council through organisations and governments outside the territory where the grievances exist. In this way the treaties are consolidating racially the people who were separated arbitrarily by new boundaries.

The tedious process by which appeals reach the Council and the facilities by which any one member can sidetrack them are tantamount to the breakdown of this fundamental principle in the treaties of peace. Members of minority races, who invite support from their kith and kin on the other side of the frontiers are

looked upon as disloyalists : in some cases they are charged with high treason : in all cases they are punished for their audacity in asserting that they have legitimate cause to complain. They are blacklisted and subjected to differential administrative treatment ; they are intimidated. All sorts of subterfuges are resorted to and technicalities discovered in their professions and trades in order to punish them. They are treated like alien enemies. The minority treaties have thus become a cruel travesty ; they are used as a thumbscrew to force compliance with unjust conditions, as an Achilles heel to crush recalcitrancy.

How fierce passions can be stirred over the position of minorities was illustrated at the Council of the League of Nations held at Lugano in December, 1928, when Mr. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, made a ferocious attack on the conduct of the German Minority in Upper Silesia in daring to express their grievances through their own local organisation and declared that some of their leaders "had notoriously committed the crime of high treason." "The mad outburst," said Herr Stresemann, the German Foreign Minister, in reply, "was prompted by a spirit of hatred towards the German Minority." The incident serves to show that even in Upper Silesia, where the Geneva Convention adds special protection to minorities, the Polish Government ignores its obligations and considers that the demand for the execution of rights doubly conferred upon minority citizens is equivalent to high treason.

It is just inside the new frontiers that irredentism has its chief breeding ground. So long as people are classified in strata according to racial origin, language, and religion, so long will minorities remain irredentists. Within the British Commonwealth live men of all races, colours, many diverse languages (in some countries there are three official languages) and observing hundreds of religious beliefs, but except in the normal demand for increased autonomy, which the British Government encourages by its example and in the full expression of which constitutional liberties rest, there are no minority questions. In the far-spread Russia of the Soviet a medley of races who have no common language live under no worse conditions than does the genuine Russian under Sovietism and racially are treated with far more consideration than their kindred in detached Russia, as witness the greater local freedom of the Ukrainian in Russia than in Poland.

The treatment of racial minorities is a peril which cannot be shirked if peace is to endure. At the March, 1929, Session of the League Council, Senator Dandurand, of Canada, tabled a resolution in favour of a thorough inquiry into the operation of the minority treaties, condemning the atmosphere of mystery and secrecy which surrounded them, and he proposed new methods of procedure. It was a modest proposal, but the representatives of the Little Entente opposed any change in procedure and invited the Council to compare the situation of minorities now and before the

war—a comparison which is inapplicable unless it is assumed that one of the chief objects of the war has failed and that its sacrifices have been in vain.

After the representatives of the Little Entente States had let off steam at the Council meeting, the delegates of the big States hastened to bring about a compromise. They made admissions of failure and expressed pious hopes for improvements if nothing was done to cloud the peaceful and brotherly atmosphere. The compromise resolution requested a report on the proposal which would be supplemented by observations from the States subject to minority treaties or by any member of the League.

The procedure which has been followed provided the usual facilities for obstruction. As all members, except the representatives of States, who object to all change, recognised the failure of the system the direct course of action would have been the appointment of a permanent Minorities Commission, the object of which would be to set up a general standard of rights and duties for minorities to be observed in the constitutions of all States members of the League.

The alternative would be the appointment of a permanent judicial authority by the League Assembly, not the Council, which would act independently and whose decisions would not be subject to revision by the League Council or to the veto of a single State.

The process even then would be clumsy and slow ; there would be no finality. What authority could see that wrongs were redressed ? There is no machinery

in existence which could enforce the observance of the treaties. Legal judgments and resolutions have only a moral force which would not carry weight with governments who disliked the policy which the decisions embodied.

The prospect of either getting the Council to act promptly and judicially as the guardian of minorities, or to agree to delegation of the duty to a judicial authority is extremely remote. A change in the attitude of the League of Nations is necessary and is due. The time for modification and development is ripe. A scheme should be framed to enable the League Assembly to make Article 19 of the Covenant effective, that is "to advise a reconsideration by members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world."

The treatment of minorities in border territories has its reactions on the political situation on both sides of the line. A recent writer, Mr. Korostowetz, brings a vehement indictment against the Poles for antagonising German minorities by calculated oppression, confiscating property and making life intolerable. Mr. Korostowetz is a Russian who has an intimate knowledge of Poland; he has been a special correspondent for American and English newspapers, and has written several books on Eastern European problems. He is obviously prejudiced against the Poles, but in his "Re-birth of Poland," published in 1928, he makes a point which emphasises the political consequences of

the hardships inflicted on German residents in the new Poland :—

“In the case of the German minority, which in numerous towns of West Poland forms the most important productive element, it can only be attributed to the innate hatred of the Poles, especially for such minorities with whom, in their own interest, they would do well to attain compromises on individual questions and seek to establish amicable relations. The oppression of the Germans must necessarily react unfavourably on Polish-German relations, as the native Poles endeavour to acquire the land of the foreigners, in this case of the Germans. These Germans, deprived of their property and driven to despair, cross the frontier in crowds and seek refuge and the means of existence among their countrymen in Germany, where in the confusion following the war these were not easy to find and the conditions of life are still difficult.”

The loyal execution of minority treaties, while allaying irritation and promoting more cordial relations between racial units in a State, would not remove all the elements of dissatisfaction which provoke strife along the Eastern frontiers. The whole partition from Central Europe to the Baltic is challenged and must be judged by its effect in local conditions and on European peace.

There are four phases of the problem which, while differing from each other, are inevitably co-related. One cannot be judged without the other. The position

of East Prussia can only be judged in relation to Memel on one side, Danzig and the Corridor on the other, while Upper Silesia, as a key country between east and west, which has its own baffling and insoluble problems.

II : THE UPPER SILESIAN TANGLE

THE story of Upper Silesia and the Peace Conference told in more detail in a previous chapter, had many dramatic and tragic episodes. From the time that Russia betrayed the Allies a new orientation of powers had to be contemplated. When the probabilities were that the Central Powers would not win, a new policy had to be planned. The British Government had its peace papers prepared in anticipation for the guidance of the Conference. These papers, issued by the Foreign Office, were not accepted as an official expression of policy, but at the same time definite recommendations were made based, in the case of Upper Silesia, on very skimpy and immature data. Because, according to German statistics, the ethnographical majority in Upper Silesia appeared to be Polish, and as the inhabitants had elected Polish opposition members to the Reichstag, it was hastily assumed that a majority of the population would favour union with the new Polish State. That ethnography should be the test of nationality and that political opposition is a proof of hostility to a sovereignty would, if applied to the British Empire, have disastrous consequences.

The Foreign Office commentator added an economic reason which would have had some force if it had been true, namely, that the new Polish State would require Upper Silesian coal for coking purposes as it had no alternative supply.

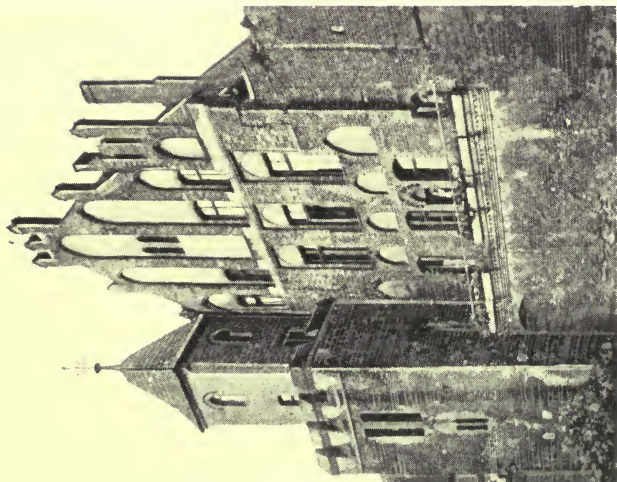
A further inquiry in Paris on behalf of the British delegation confirmed the first erroneous conclusions, which were also endorsed by the American experts and readily welcomed without question by the French experts.

These early mistaken conclusions of the British so-called experts should be contrasted with the realities of the situation which further investigation revealed, and the handling of which was a fine testimony to the fairness of the British spirit. When the British representatives, whether ministers, officials, military officers, or outside experts, grasped the real facts about Upper Silesia, they were not influenced by a spirit of vindictiveness, by prejudice, or favouritism; their one overwhelming desire was to secure a square deal in the interest of justice and of every party; above all in the interest of European peace—a permanent settlement. It is a tribute to their honesty of purpose that they were strong enough to revise premature recommendations and to resist to the uttermost of their power the intrigue, duplicity, and chicanery, which trails through the sordid tale of the Upper Silesian negotiations.

From the standpoint of international law the final partition of Upper Silesia cannot be justified. It is not in accordance with a strict interpretation of the Treaty



DANZIG: TOWN HALL (14TH C.)



THORN: ANCIENT CASTLE

of Peace. The new frontier was drawn in defiance of the wishes of the inhabitants, and of the geographical and economic conditions of the locality. These were the twin fundamental bases upon which territorial revision should have been founded; the Supreme Council had no power to take into account extraneous factors, weigh up the value of votes according to the districts from which they came or the political issues they represented; it had no title to vary the plebiscite; its duty was to interpret the plebiscite, bearing only in mind the two provisos: "the wishes of the inhabitants and the geographical and economic conditions of the locality."

In regard to the industrial areas which formed the subject of embittered controversy, there can be no question that the Treaty should have been interpreted so as to comply with these fundamental principles, in which case this concentrated industrial unit, "the indivisible triangle" the British called it, would not have been dislocated.

The methods employed to effect the illegal partition, described in a previous chapter, were in themselves sufficient to condemn the act.

It is also a moot point whether the Council of the League did not exceed its authority in laying down the line of demarcation. The president on the occasion had some misgivings on the question. He said the League Council was asked for a recommendation "as to the line which the principal Allied and Associated Powers should lay down." The ordinary procedure under the

Covenant was not followed ; the Council followed the course laid down by the Supreme Council.

Then again the Council went beyond its instructions. Having no confidence that the partition which it concocted was in itself workable, the Council drew up a Convention about as long as the Treaty itself, forming a system of government to regulate the affairs of the dismembered territory, improvised its procedure and armed it with authority free from the binding restrictions of the Treaty provisions. The momentous nature of the decision which the League Council undertook was foreshadowed by Lord Cecil when he warned the Council that "it will take care that its decision is not only just in itself, but is arrived at with such guarantees of justice as will guarantee its justice to the opinion of the world. It is not enough in this matter to be just ; you must also appear to be just as well."

While Lord Cecil feared that the decision would not convince public opinion Mr. Lloyd George, writing two years afterwards, declared that the award was not accepted by both parties as a fair settlement, "due to the manner in reaching the judgment," as there was exceptional treatment of the question, "hence doubts and misgivings in which the judgment of the League has been received."

The Upper Silesian outrage is one of the blackest spots in post-war Europe. It cannot be straightened by throwing down tariff barriers, abolishing restrictions to free intercourse within the province : the injury is too deep to be healed by such well meaning palliatives.

Germany did not get a square deal. No one played the game by her. The precious democratic solvent—self-determination—was a tragic travesty. And so the seething pot of Upper Silesia will continue to bubble and splutter, always threatening to boil over until after the present Convention, which just manages to keep the lid on, expires in 1935, when a genuine plebiscite should be carried out as it will be in the same year in the Saar territory: otherwise conditions now difficult may become impossible.

III: POLAND'S URGE NORTH AND WEST

THE Polish leaders were smitten with the microbe of megalomania before the Allies resurrected their country into a State. When the tide of battle turned in favour of the Allies they had visions of a Great Poland stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Claims put before the Peace Conference would have transferred to Poland the whole of West and East Prussia, Danzig, and all the Baltic ports, with the exception of Königsberg which would have been left as a petty republic under Polish suzerainty. Are we sure that Poland has relinquished her lust for power, her dream of a maritime greatness? The writings of representative Poles would not lead us to think so. Germany does not believe in a satisfied Poland.

In a memorandum issued by General Groener, the German Minister of Defence, published in January 1929, and presumed to be genuine, it was stated that :

“Polish hunger for German territory in East Prussia or Upper Silesia, and the activity of Polish policy, are no secrets. German Government Departments know of Polish efforts to push forward among the inhabitants of German border regions, and deliberately to penetrate economic and banking institutions. The Berlin Press of all Parties (see the “Berliner Tageblatt” No. 501, of October, 23; the “Vossische Zeitung,” No. 503; and the “Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,” No. 499, of October 24; the “Germania,” No. 497, of October 25) recently gave this impression as the result of a journey through the border marches. According to trustworthy information, active military training of civilian societies is going on inside the Polish frontiers. It was accompanied last September by district manœuvres in Pomerellia (the Corridor), under military control, and with the participation of regular troops. Even German citizens of Polish race were called up and, at the end of their training (of which the object was apparently the carrying out of acts of sabotage) were sent back into Germany.

“These signs indicate that both economically and by working upon the inhabitants, the Poles are creating a jumping-off place for a raid.”¹

Germany has precedents which justify fears : did not Poland seize East Galicia and present an accomplished deed to the Peace Conference ? Did not Poland seize Vilna in breach of treaty obligations and in defiance of

→¹ “Review of Reviews.” January 15th, 1929.

the Allies, the Supreme Council, and the League of Nations? Was not Poland within an ace of presenting another *fait accompli* in the case of Upper Silesia?

Germany could not overlook another circumstance: Poland in close alliance with France is one of the most militarist States in the world.

Mr. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, on the other hand, has repudiated all chauvinistic objects on the part of his country. He has given the assurance to the English public "that not only has no Polish Government ever cherished any scheme of aggression or of annexation in regard to Germany, but I do not know of any political party or association in Poland capable of stating, or of spreading such ideas."²

Mr. Zaleski is, of course, perfectly sincere in his statement, and applied to Polish Governments it is strictly accurate. But a suspicious neighbour may look beyond Governments and officials and interpret the ideas of party leaders who are potential ministers. That the irresponsible leaders of to-day in Poland may be the responsible ministers of to-morrow has already been illustrated in the short kaleidoscopic political history of the country.

Mr. Zaleski in his generalisation is not correct: political parties and associations in Poland are not only capable of cherishing schemes of aggression and annexation; they advocate such schemes.

Quite a number of prominent politicians and writers are frankly chauvinistic. One of these is Mr. Stanislaw

² "Review of Reviews." February 15th, 1929.

Grabski, brother of the former Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, who reformed the currency and introduced the zloty. Mr. Grabski has held several ministerial positions himself. He is now professor of Political Economy in Lemberg University, and is the editor of a political newspaper, the "Slowo Polskie" of Lemberg. In a publication issued in 1923, "Uvagi o biezacej historycznej chwilki Polski" ("Observations concerning the present historical epoch in the development of Poland"), Mr. Grabski, while recognising that Germany will never acquiesce in the loss of her territory, openly advocates the extension of Poland to the east and the north. He writes :—

"Does anyone believe that Germany has permanently acquiesced in the loss of the industrial district of Upper Silesia, and in the severance of East Prussia from the rest of Germany by the Corridor? If so, he is either blind or he declines to see the real facts of the case. The decision of the East Prussian problem which was given by the Treaty of Versailles is too artificial to be permanently maintained."

In spite of this admission Mr. Grabski advocates Poland's claim for East Prussia. He says :—

"The East Prussian problem has the same significance to-day as in the days of Casimir Jagiello; the eastern frontiers of Poland are as permanently restless as they were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

He favours the permeation of Masuria and Ermland in East Prussia "which must be the national programme

of our youth." He also advocates extension towards the Baltic and the Oder. He is constrained to admit that :—

"Poland, on account of the Baltic coast, will sooner or later clash with Germany. For even if we on our side were to forget our obligations in respect of Ermland and Prussian Masuria, the Germans would never forget their claim to Pommerellen, for they will not forget their obligations to Königsberg, the way to which lies through our Corridor. In this clash Poland, however, will be victorious only if she is not merely technically prepared by the necessary organisation and equipment of her army, but also politically, by the arousing of a Polish national consciousness in the Polish population of East Prussia."

Other quotations to the same effect might be cited, all supporting the trend of Poland towards the Baltic and the Oder with aggressive designs on Germany.

Another writer, still more intimately associated with the Polish Government than Mr. Grabski is Mr. Stanislaw Bukowiecki. He has held the position of Attorney General since 1919. He is a jurist of distinction and a journalist of national reputation. He not only claims East Prussia as the northern hinterland of Poland, but as historic territory which should be restored to Poland. He says :—

"Here lies (in East Prussia) for the Polish organism a particularly painful and, at the same time, particularly important spot. East Prussia penetrates the

territory of the Polish Republic to a considerable depth; its frontier from Dirschau, through Soldau, to Suwalki, is of great length; it divides us from Lithuania; it prevents our access to the sea in a central and easterly direction, more particularly affecting the north-eastern portion of our State, and compels these portions of our national territories to seek a connection with the sea by a long circuitous route."

This authority proceeds to argue that to detach East Prussia from Germany would not be a violation of the principle of nationality; he audaciously claims that the province, with the doubtful exception of Königsberg, is Polish in character. He says:—

"Most grievous to Germany, however, is the loss of Pommerellen, especially of its northern part, the so-called Danzig corridor, which separates East Prussia from the rest of the State. The Danzig corridor, which on the one hand is a stumbling-block to Germany, represents on the other hand, a cause of complete dissatisfaction to Poland, something that does not guarantee her a really secure and permanent access to the sea. It is open to Germany to work for the removal of this obstacle, but it is likewise open to us to work for its extension. The mere fact that the lower course of the Vistula is not exclusively in our possession, whereas its eastern bank belongs to Germany, and further the fact that the Free City of Danzig, to a considerable extent, is bounded by German territory, is most unfavourable

to Poland and, in case of warlike development, would be dangerous.”¹

A former Polish Consul General at Königsberg, Mr. Srokovski, is responsible for another work in which the annexation of East Prussia is also advocated. He says :—

“No sacrifice could be too great which would win East Prussia in one way or another, and draw it into the orbit of the Polish race. This would indeed be work of a civilizing character.”

Mr. Srokovski’s policy is economic as well as political and military. He recommends the economic strangulation of East Prussia.

It is feared that this policy of strangulation might be precipitated by the forcible annexation of Lithuania by Poland. There is only a relative difference between Poland’s illegal annexation of the province of Vilna, forming one-third of Lithuania, and a predatory raid to annex the whole country. A state of war theoretically exists between Poland and Lithuania. There was no excuse for the Polish raid on Vilna. It would be an easy matter to create artificially some cause for intervention by Poland in Lithuania. Such an outrage might provoke the intervention of Russia and might lead to European war. On the other hand, it might not be opportune for Russia to intervene. How would the western nations apply force to oust Poland?

¹ These and other quotations are taken from literal translations from the original Polish, published in “Poland’s Westward Trend,” by Ernst R. B. Hansen (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1928), and it is assumed by the present writer that these translations are accurate.

Poland defied them in the case of Vilna as little Lithuania defied them in the case of Memel. Would the powers risk a European conflagration to save Lithuania from being annexed by Poland? More probably there would be a compromise so that Poland could dig herself in by stages.

The subject is one which naturally causes nervousness on the part of disarmed Germany.

Other Polish writers, apart from numerous newspapers have advocated the incorporation of East Prussia in Poland. A review of the propagandist activities in this direction tending to show that Poland's lust is not yet satiated are set out in the booklet to which reference has already been made ("Poland's Westward Trend.")

Then there is another political leader—that romantic figure, General Haller, who has his own following of extreme nationalists. At the time of the Pilsudski revolution he almost came into armed conflict with the Pilsudski partisans, which would have meant that both, or either of the rival forces would have invaded part of East Prussia. General Haller showed restraint and discretion, but there is no knowing when he and his extremists may not take part in another political upheaval, although he is not taken so seriously by other politicians as he takes himself. At the same time he is a fire brand to be reckoned with. He looks forward to the realisation of the Dmowski conception of a Greater Poland. In discussing the future with him when I met him at a manor house in the Corridor, he

said: "There are five great countries in Europe—England, France, Germany, Italy, and Poland, but the greatest of the five is Poland."

General Haller has strong views on many of the eastern problems. Take his view, for instance, of Minorities. He thinks that minority treaties are a mistake, a crime. He declares that the man who belongs to a minority of any sort is only half a citizen. In the country in which he lives he does not enjoy the full benefit of the law, his children do not secure the full value of state education, there is always an atmosphere of animosity in the home which the children imbibe. If he had his way he would wipe out all minority treaties and thereby solve the minority problem.

General Haller may be looked upon by some of the other parties as a back number. That cannot be said of the younger generation of Pan Poles. An example of this kind of propaganda may be instanced by the manifesto of the Academic Union of Pan-Polish Youth which on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the liberation of Poland declared:—

"To-day we turn our eyes across the frontiers to our compatriots in Silesia, Prussian-Masuria, and Western Pomerellia, to whom it has hitherto not been granted to breathe the air of the liberated fatherland. On the tenth anniversary of our independence we take solemn oath to fight for a great Poland, within whose frontiers there will be room for all its sons."

Nor, in calculating the subversive forces in Poland, must we forget the fascist party of Roman Dmowski, who are frankly militant and carry on their campaign in a party which proclaims its purpose in its name: "Camp of Great Poland."

While Mr. Zaleski is perfectly true in his statement that no Polish Government has advocated imperialistic policy he cannot deny that there is a very widespread propagandist movement in Poland which has its exponents in more than one political party in spreading annexationist ideas.

Poland has not yet reached the stage of political stability which precludes the possibility of other political upheavals. Pilsudski is not, by any means, a permanency. He has made many enemies. Mr. Zaleski has not a freehold of the position of Foreign Minister. There are restless forces within the Republic. The Extreme Nationalist party might, in the whirligig uncertainty of Polish politics, come out on top. Such forceful personalities as Dmowski, General Haller, Korfanty, and numerous lesser lights are violently hostile to Pilsudski, who has seized power by force and retains it with the help of the military. It is a precarious position.

Mr. Zaleski added to his declaration of non-aggression, referred to above, a gesture to Germany. To remove all doubts of Poland's pacific intentions he said his government "would be ready to conclude with Germany a treaty guaranteeing reciprocally the territorial integrity of the two States." For the same reason

Poland wants a Western Locarno guaranteed by France, England, Italy, and America, and any other country ready to join. Would Mr. Zaleski, or any other statesman, have expected France after the war of 1870 to have signed a treaty with Germany "guaranteeing reciprocally the integrity of the Land State." And Alsace was not so exclusively French as the Alsace-Lorraines along the Eastern frontier are German.

IV : DANZIG AND GDYNIA

ONE of these new Alsace-Lorraines is Danzig. The creation of Danzig as a Free City with additions of large suburban areas and agricultural territory from Marienwerder was a bad compromise. High Commissioners have done their best to smoothe over the difficulties of an impossible situation. The entry of a more democratic element in the Senate has made for better relations with Poland, but nothing will sever the political ties between parties in Danzig and their national affinities in Germany. Political unity survives geographical partition. Danzig becomes more and more German in sentiment; the Polish minority artificially fostered declines.

Polish authorities have always treated Danzig as enemy territory. With the dislocation of the former avenues of trade its loss as an emporium and the withdrawal of the stimulus given by Germany to local

industries, the Poles should have developed Danzig as an international port. Instead of that they have neglected the navigation of the Vistula ; they have diverted trade from natural routes, they have by a prodigious expenditure of money built the rival port of Gdynia, and are constructing a new direct railway to feed the new port and direct further water and rail traffic from Danzig. An attempt is also made to cut off trade from Danzig by developing direct sea traffic with Dirschau (Tczew).

It is not claimed that the port of Gdynia or the new railway are, or will be, commercial enterprises. Gdynia could not compete commercially with Danzig ; it exists on preferential treatment and state subsidies.

But, it is argued, the development of Poland will be so phenomenal within the next few years that the capacity of both Danzig and Gdynia will be strained to the uttermost to cope with it. The answer to that is that it would have been far more economical to have doubled the capacity of the Port of Danzig. Danzig is one of the great natural ports of the world—unique at the mouth of a river in having dead water. Its expansion was sound policy economically, and would have been a political gesture of immense import. Poland may fall back on a second line of defence and claim that a new port was required to accommodate the Polish navy. The value of a navy to Poland is problematical. She will never be able to put big fighting ships into the Baltic. She has not yards in which to build them, and if built by France she could

not repair them. In any case naval ambitions did not necessarily involve the construction of a commercial port. One is led irrevocably to the conclusion that Gdynia exists in order to damage Danzig—as a menace, and as a weapon for bargaining.

There is, however, a yet stronger case against the alternative and competitive port. The Peace Conference gave Poland the free use of Danzig to meet its claim that Danzig, and Danzig only, was indispensable for the economic existence of Poland. There was no question of an alternative port. It was a wrench for Mr. Lloyd George to agree to detach such an intensely German city as Danzig from Germany, and if an alternative outlet had been conceivable at the time Poland would probably not have been granted the use of Danzig under existing conditions. Had the idea been adumbrated, had the possibility of a new port constructed on virgin soil been foreshadowed, it is almost certain that there would have been a plebiscite for Danzig, or it would have remained with Germany.

One can only speculate what was in the minds of the Statesmen who accepted as one of the conditions of peace that Poland should have free access to the sea. A free outlet to the sea did not necessarily mean annexation of territory in which the outlet was situated. Czecho-Slovakia has free unrestricted outlets to the sea without territorial possession. Czecho-Slovakia has the right to use Stettin as an outlet, but prefers Hamburg and Bremen. In 1928 the value of trade by Hamburg in thousands of Czech crowns was 2,822,779,

and by Bremen 793,581—a total of 3,616,360, which is in excess of the land-carried trade except than to Germany and Austria.¹

Other land-locked countries have similar rights. The great waterways of the world are internationalised. Had the Vistula been internationalised that great river would have been maintained in a navigable state which Poland by itself is not able for financial reasons to do. Similar arrangements to those for the Oder and the Elbe could have been made. An international railway could have been constructed and Poland could have had not only a free port at Danzig, but also free access to the Baltic at Elbing and Königsberg. From a commercial point of view these various highways of traffic and free ports would have been incomparably more advantageous to Poland. Politically closer intercourse without irritating restrictions and a provocative environment, would have developed more friendly relations with Germany. Poland's interpretation of access to the sea was not by way of a river, a railway, a corridor, or free ports; she wanted a big slice of German territory in order to dominate the Baltic as a maritime power and round off the symmetry of a great Poland. Has Poland given up her dream of greatness?

The existing regime in Danzig cannot endure; the system of Government can never give confidence. High Commissioners always try to make the best of the situation. They seek accommodations; confer, postpone decisions, make compromises—anything

¹ National Bank of Czecho-Slovakia Bulletin 28, 1929.



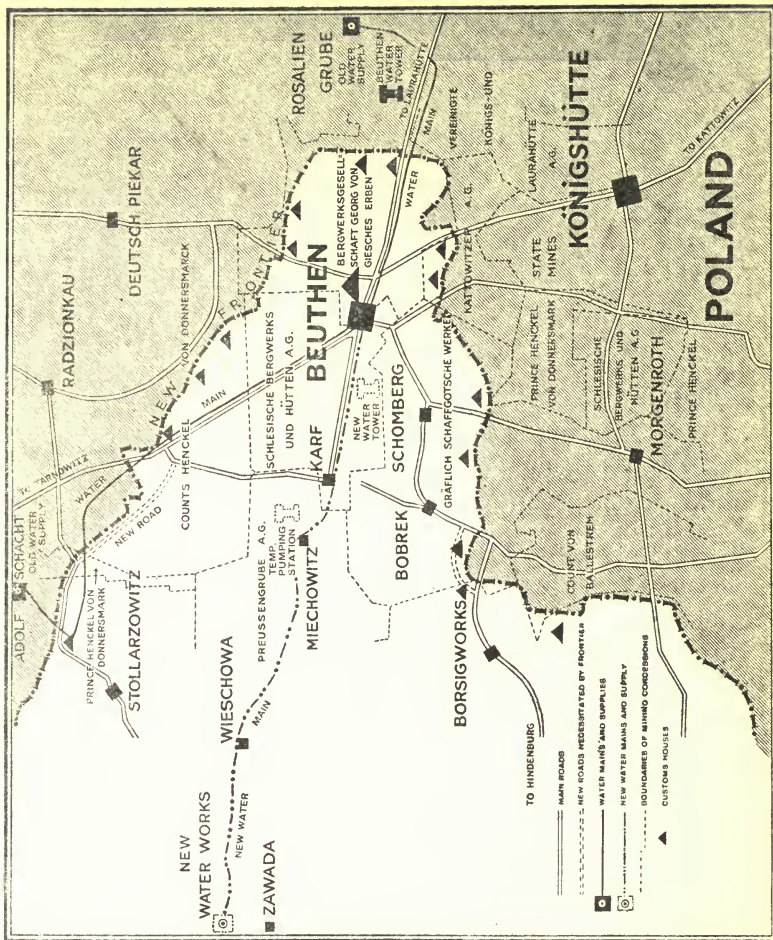
SCHWETZ: RUINS OF CASTLE OF TEUTONIC KNIGHTS.

to keep the system working. It is the first essential of a well-ordered community that it should have confidence in its Constitution and in its interpretation. That confidence does not exist. There is absent on both sides good will. Weak spots in the machinery are always sought, and attempts made to go outside the provisions of the Convention. One admires the labour, energy, and resolve devoted by well-disposed officials to minimise difficulties and smooth out differences with the object of obtaining general acceptance of the existing situation, but to little purpose.

High Commissioners in Danzig as well as the League representatives in Upper Silesia have without exception shown a genuine desire and, generally speaking, a judicial temperament, and in their thankless tasks have earned the gratitude of humanity, but I doubt if one of them would admit that racial reconciliation is any nearer than in 1919 or that conventions are milestones towards the millennium, or even a step nearer international amity.

V: POLAND A GREAT POWER

LIKE other inside observers of the Eastern situation Mr. J. D. Gregory, formerly assistant secretary of the British Foreign Office and in charge of Eastern affairs sees no easy solution of the Polish Problem.—



UPPER SILESIA :

Map showing cutting by new frontier of main roads, mining properties, and water mains (Beuthen originally drew its water from Adolfschacht and Rosaliengrube), and also the packing of the frontier with Customs stations.

He writes :—

“The three great external problems that have got to be solved some day or other, Danzig, the Corridor, and Lithuania, are more than may appear at first sight, interdependent : and they will never be solved unless on the one hand Poland realises what a hopeless position she will always be in unless she can get on really good terms with her neighbours, great or small ; and unless on the other hand her neighbours make up their mind once and for all that Poland has come to stay, and to stay as a Great Power.”¹

The place of Poland as a Great Power depends not on the square miles of territory over which it assumes authority, but on the unification of its own political hegemony ; on the consolidation of its nationalism, and on its relations with its neighbours. As now constituted the country is handicapped by gaping fissures in its political organism. It suffers from domestic biological divergencies. Besides the presence of five minority races, Poland includes racial kinsmen who have not yet been completely assimilated. The Austrian or Galician Poles represented low cultural and economic standards, while enjoying autonomous and political privileges, enabling a selected class to distinguish themselves in the political and professional life of the Hapsburg Empire. In Congress Poland the Poles were crushed under the heel of Czarism, uneducated, badly housed, underpaid, denied political rights.

¹ *The Edge of Diplomacy*, 1929.

The German Poles of Posen were the most advanced culturally and conquered a strong economic position, especially in agriculture.²

The national minority problem is all the weaker in Poland because the kindred populations inhabit adjoining States.

This division of the Polish race, living under different sets of laws, customs, and institutions with varying standards of civilisation, must be overcome in building the new State. The first line of safety and solidarity is for Poland to elevate its inhabitants to approximately the same cultural level. Few races possess a natural capacity for assimilation or accept a liberal tolerance, which is the alternative. Poles will never succeed in assimilating or satisfying the Germans, Jews, White Russians, Ukrainians, and Lithuanians within their borders, although they succeed in bringing about unity of political action among these diverse opposition groups.

Poland likes to pose as the buffer state between Sovietism and Teutonism; as the protector of Western civilisation from the Russian peril and as the force which will hold German chauvinism in check. Militarily, Poland is not strong enough to guard against either of these so-called dangers: the Russian steam roller, if, or when, it is ready, will roll over Poland as it pleases, as there will not be another "miracle of the

² "In former German Poland the standard of prosperity of the Polish community was higher than in the other division—at the same time the population were, generally speaking, more thrifty." ("Polish Economist," January, 1928.)

Vistula"; Germany re-armed could conquer Poland with as little difficulty as in 1917. Should these two military forces ever get together through the blundering diplomacy of the former Allies of the West, Poland will be in a vice; its life blood will be squeezed out of it.

Whatever may happen about frontier changes, or if nothing happens, Poland's safety lies in a non-aggressive policy. Poland can only prosper by cultivating friendly relations with its neighbours. Towards this end it should encourage an interchange of goods. On the contrary, it is chauvinistic both economically and militarily.

Poland is the most protectionist country in reconstructed Europe. A Conservative Member of Parliament, Sir Clive Morrison-Bell, who exhibits a now famous map in relief of tariff walls to demonstrate the excessive handicaps placed on commerce, gives figures to show the comparative height of these obstructions to free intercourse and good will. Poland occupies the unenviable position of being guarded by higher walls than its neighbours have erected—the relative exclusiveness being Poland 22; Germany, 15.5; Czecho-Slovakia, 18.5; Hungary, 19; and Lithuania, 15. In spite of these high walls and other shackles on trade, in spite of tariff wars with Germany, Poland's trade with Germany is far greater than that with any other country, just as German ships get the biggest share of its carrying trade.

Free trade along the Eastern frontier would be a real contribution towards peace. The father of modern

British free trade, Richard Cobden, always held that free trade was a means : the end was international peace. He wanted free trade to be engrafted on the Peace Movement. "They are one and the same cause," he said. Free Trade is an ideal which is further away now than it was a hundred years ago. Europe is more protectionist than it was in 1914, and there is no hope during the lifetime of the present generation in seeing Customs Houses abolished as a measure to establish frontiers of friendship between the states torn asunder by the disruptive peace treaties.

Is there hope in disarmament? Armaments create fear and engender antagonism. The fallacy that an armed peace is possible has been shattered for ever. Countries which pile up armaments will ultimately want to use these machines of destruction. As Lord Grey says, allied exclusive alliances and armaments will produce counter combinations. He adds : "The lesson of European history is so plain : it is that no enduring peace can be found in competing armaments."

The enigma of Russia is always held up as the unknown factor which compels the Western Powers to arm. But a combination of Western Powers can reduce armaments all round and still have adequate protection against the mysterious Soviet-Slav danger. It was one of the implications of the Peace Treaties, one of the fundamental principles of the League of Nations, that the universal reduction of armaments was the first imperative task of organised humanity. There cannot be peace, justice, or security in an armament ridden

world. Yet eleven years of so-called peace finds Europe living under big armies, with more diabolical agencies of destruction at its command than existed in 1914 when the war which was to end war began. There is no hope in sight of establishing peace on the frontiers of Central and North Eastern Europe by expecting disarmament of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and other militarist States. In any case, the Great Powers must set the example.

VI: ALTERNATIVES TO WAR

THERE are some signs that sanity will make headway against the madness of the militarist spirit. Students of the trend of thought must welcome the birth in Germany of a new and fruitful spirit. The drill sergeant has given place to the philosopher. The school of the militarist philosophers of Treitschke and Bernhardt has been succeeded by the school of moral philosophers, Foerster, Steiner, Keyserling, and others. Instead of mobilising armed forces whose ultimate function in dire necessity is destruction of life, this movement seeks to mobilise the moral forces of the world to save humanity. This new movement expresses the detestation of war—in plays, stories, essays, histories, and in a larger way in the philosophic works of new writers who are groping towards a nobler conception of humanity and by that broody exponent of a more pessimistic doctrine, Oswald Spengler. You find the

same outlook taught to the younger intellectuals and moral philosophers—leaders of the future intelligentsia—in the “school of wisdom” at Darmstadt, established by Keyserling, the great teacher and moralist, and in the German Institute of Politics in Berlin (*Deutsche Hoheschule für Politik*) founded by Dr. Jackh in memory of his son killed in the war. “I founded it,” he says, “for the new Germany, for the new generation, the generation of my son, type of Young Germany from whose fate I wanted to save his generation.” The Institute is closely identified with the Geneva School for international studies. These are all symptoms—signposts pointing towards a new Europe, a new conception of intellectual ascendancy in world politics. A German-American, gathering the threads of the new philosophies, expresses the hope that :—

“If, by the development of her inner resources, by the cultivation of her intellectual and moral heritage, by demonstrating her right to international leadership in the realm of the spirit, she succeeds in replacing what she has lost in outward power, she will be the foremost safeguard of European tranquillity, happiness, and enlightenment in the decades to come.”¹

This new doctrine—even although, perhaps yet only a small voice crying in the wilderness—should be tenderly nurtured. In the Germany to-day, surrounded by armed enemies, its prospect of getting a hearing is not alluring and without some reciprocal pacific gesture

¹ “German After-War Problems,” by Kuno Francke.

from neighbouring nations will remain unheeded and inaudible.

The grim realism of the situation is that to-day, along the Eastern frontier, conditions resemble war-time more than did the state of things in 1914. Every element associated with the genesis and the provocation of war challenges you : distrust, jealousy, the spirit of envy and the spirit of revenge, unjust treatment of minorities, resentment, racial hatred. It is true that the forces on the other side which restrain nations from plunging into war, by mediation, moral and economic pressure, are infinitely greater and are organised.

The inevitability of war should be excluded from our thoughts. Germany, by the pact of Locarno, has agreed not to redress her Eastern wrongs by armed force, but reserves the right to open the question at any time. If attacked, Germany's attitude would immediately change. An American observer expresses the German sentiments tersely when he says :—

“In German eyes Poland as at present constituted is a monstrosity without justification in history, ethnography, geography, or economics. It is merely the living symbol of the rage and vindictiveness of the France that sat at the Paris peace table. When the time comes, it must go, and Germany's dismembered parts must be restored to her.”¹

We swing round to the inevitable impasse, to the impossibility of reconciling German aspirations with

¹ “Back of War,” by Henry Kittredge Norton, 1928.

Polish interests; the status quo sustained by the League of Nations, or the only alternative which no one likes to think of as inevitable.

There are possible alternatives. Take the case of Upper Silesia. This problem comes up for revision in 1935 and may well precipitate a general crisis. It is recognised by all impartial authorities that the partition of Upper Silesia was a base and corrupt transaction. It is on record that while President Wilson wished to hand over the whole of the province to Poland, Mr. Lloyd George held that it should be retained undiminished by Germany. If it is premature to hold another plebiscite, even under neutral auspices, a possible solution is to make the province another Luxemburg. For a further transitional period let it have a government which would be a modification of the system now in operation providing for complete equality of language, education, religion, unrestricted intercourse, uniformity of laws, taxes, etc., throughout the whole province. Again following the Luxemburg precedent, it should have economic union with Germany. It could also have free trade with Poland so that a breeding ground of war might be transformed into a nursery of Peace. This idealist solution may be scorned by political realists, but it would make for the pacification of Europe and could be made effective by the united action of the Western powers and the League of Nations.

The future of Danzig is bound up with the future of the Corridor. It is within the sphere of practical

politics to restore territorial integrity to Germany and at the same time assure Poland free access to the sea. If Poland prefers a free outlet to the Baltic to territorial aggrandisement, then a compromise is practicable on the following lines :—

The Vistula with all its outlets, together with the harbours of Danzig and Dirschau, to be internationalised and its administration to be vested in a reconstructed Danzig Harbour Board :

Poland to enjoy the same rights on German railways and rivers as have been vested in Czecho-Slovakia for the security of its world trade under the Treaty of Versailles :

Germany to concede to Poland free harbours at Königsberg, Elbing, Stettin, Hamburg, or anywhere else :

Germany to use its influence with Lithuania to induce the latter to grant Poland analogous privileges at Memel :

Through trains on the railways running northwards to the sea, via Posen and Gdynia, Posen, and Danzig, and Warsaw, Mława, and Danzig to be under Polish administration. The execution of these conditions to be under the control of a reconstructed League of Nations Commission at Danzig, the Commission to be provided with extensive rights for immediate intervention in case of infraction of the treaty by either of the contracting parties. It could also constitute a court of arbitration for the amicable settlement of disputes between the two governments :

The Polish and Cashube minorities to be self-administering in matters of culture, under laws equal to the best extant autonomy legislation. The Prussian decree for the regulation of Polish minority schools, issued in 1928, could be amended in accordance with the wishes of the Poles.

Under this arrangement Poland would have seven harbours instead of two : Danzig, Gdynia, Hamburg, Stettin, Elbing, Königsberg, and possibly also Memel.

It is obvious that Poland would be entitled to financial compensation for improvements carried out and for displacement.

An encouraging example has been set by Greece and Jugoslavia, who have "sealed a pact of friendship, conciliation, and judicial settlement," of a bitter dispute. Greece keeps sovereignty over the Salonika zone while Jugoslavia is given free access to the Aegean.

As things stand it is inconceivable that Poland would listen to any solution which would diminish her territory or lessen her sovereign rights. To the Poles the Corridor is the touchstone of their national status, the symbol of their resurrection. To the Germans, the rape of East and West Prussia is an unforgivable crime. It is an affront which no compromise can wipe out. It touches them deeply ; it is a mortification of their soul striking at the most vulnerable embodiment of the national spirit; it outrages their cherished psychological traditions. The proud fatherland, still the greatest nation on the continent, feels as if crucified.

Science makes progress, unforeseen by the wise men of Versailles who regulated and controlled the telegraphs and cables : radio comes with its messages of friendship and goodwill ignoring frontiers and defying restrictive regulations. Radio keeps the psychological and cultural contact between Germans in the detached territory and their kin in the Fatherland. Radio maintains a community of interest which, however, only intensifies the torment and resentments which separation stimulates.

All these suggested solvents or any ameliorations of the eastern frontier problems will remain dreamy speculations unless economic and political co-operation is brought about between England, France, and Germany. Such a combination could impose its will on the League of Nations and bring into action the provisions of the covenant designed to remove conditions which menace the peace of Europe.

The Corridor is the most menacing storm centre on the Continent; how to remove the danger; to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable is the compelling task of statesmen. The logical reasoning of the diplomats and the inexorable human element force itself into every argument.

A British diplomatist, discussing the matter, had no difficulty in making a plausible case for the disruption of East Prussia. If the Associated Powers, he said, were united, it would be a matter of time to see that Poland was given access to the sea. A great State, as the ne-

to be, could not be landlocked. Its only adequate outlet was the Baltic; its essential port Danzig. Europe would have been thrown into chaos and been an easy prey to Bolshevism had the Peace Treaty not been signed and the new state received this indispensable outlet to the sea. But, added my friend, reflectively, dropping diplomatic language, "if I were a Prussian and had to ask permission of a foreign power to visit the capital of my country I am damned if I would put up with it."

APPENDIX

I

PRUSSIAN POLICY IN THE POLISH PROVINCES

IT must be recognised that the Prussian Government, having once seized Polish territory, has, during the past century and a half, repeatedly tried to give the Poles in the annexed provinces fair play. Frederick the Great's colonisation schemes were not aimed against the Poles. His object, many times declared, was to raise their cultural level by introducing German farmers among them to serve as examples of good husbandry, and thus raise the taxable value of the country. This is evident also from the fact that he recommended the settlement in Silesia of fruit farmers from the Palatinate in order to promote fruit growing, of which, he said, the Silesians had not the slightest knowledge. He recommended also that East Frisians should be settled in the Vistula lowlands, "in order to teach the inhabitants of the entire lowlands the art of butter making."

Kasimir Zimmermann, the Polish historian, writes in his work on Frederick the Great's colonisation schemes¹: "The populating of the land and the raising of its culture formed the principal motive of Frederick the Second's colonising efforts."

That his object was to raise the level of civilisation in the annexed provinces by mixing the populations, and untinged by racial bias is shown by his edicts

of 1773, in which he expressed the hope "that the positions would settle Germans in the German districts, and by his

"If a few families are established from each other their farming methods will be communicated to the local inhabitants, who will be more industrious and painstaking."

¹ *Frederick the Great and his Land Settlements*

In addition to this, there is the fact that many of his settlers were themselves Poles. Zimmermann says that 13.6 per cent. of colonists in West Prussia came from Poland: the official records show about 33 per cent., of which, by their names, 37.7 per cent. were of Polish race. Moreover, even before the First Partition, during the wars which led to it, he had invited Poles to settle in Silesia, and, as Zimmermann shows, such Poles were actually settled.

The number of colonists settled by Frederick the Great in West Prussia was comparatively small. A total of 879 families are said to have been settled in the cities and 1,286 on the land. The influx was noticeable only in one or two centres, such as Bromberg, in the Netze District.

Frederick recognised the necessity of teaching the Polish populations German, as he said, to facilitate their acquirement of good farming methods, and he adopted a number of measures to achieve this. At the same time, however, he insisted that all officials, and above all teachers, in the Polish provinces should be thoroughly conversant with the Polish language.

Zimmermann admits that some of his other measures, such as the veto on Polish servants, did not survive the stage of being considered. The proposal that persons who could not speak German should not be allowed to marry applied only to minors.

Frederick's attitude towards the nobles was due to the fact that many of these collected the rents on their West Prussian properties—which they had leased—and lived in Poland. As Frederick was unwilling that so much money should leave the country he made arrangements with Poland in 1775 whereby the absentee nobles were given a period of six years in which to decide whether to sell their properties in Prussia or take up Polish citizenship. In 1780 it was established that 124 owners were to go abroad. In 1781 they were requested to become tenants or sell, and at the same time the tenants were required to pay their rents in advance. In view of the opposition of the Polish Court, however, the king withdrew the offer of the properties, though he gave the nobles an opportunity to be induced, if possible, to sell. The properties, however, were sold.

The general policy of conciliation was the result of the colonisation schemes initiated by Frederick. It was a practical standstill. Zimmermann says that no colonisation was carried on in

After the re-settlement effected by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, every effort was made in Posen to win the confidence of the Poles. Poles were appointed as administrators even of German "circles." In the law courts the language of the suitor was used for the hearing of cases. Polish judges were appointed to the district courts. An amnesty was granted in respect of the events of 1794 and 1806. Instruction was carried out in the schools according to the language of the majority, so that in many schools German children were taught in the Polish language, and not merely taught Polish. Pupils matriculating to Prussian universities from the province had to pass an examination in the complete mastery of Polish. Official notices were issued in both languages. (The official gazettes were published in both tongues as late as the "'seventies." In the schools in the Polish provinces the Prussian Government maintained the principle of bi-lingualism up to the time of Bismarck's Kulturkampf.)

The insurrection of 1830 interrupted this policy of conciliation. Further concessions to Polish national sentiment were made later, but these were again checked by the risings of 1846 and 1848. By this time the leadership of the nobles had become extinguished, and the economic organisation of the Poles, largely under the guidance of the clergy, which was to prove decisive had set in. The increasing strength of the Polish organisations, the influx of Poles from Russian Poland, and the increasingly emphatic demands for liberation called forth the repressive policy of Bismarck, which commenced with the expulsion of the Russian Poles and proceeded with the passing of the Colonisation Act of 1866, and the abolition, in 1887, of the Polish language in all elementary schools in the Polish provinces.

Meanwhile the tension, which had never been absent between the two races, had been gravely accentuated by the Kulturkampf, which was the reply to the ultramontane aspirations of the newly-formed Centre Party in Germany. At the beginning of this struggle, Bismarck abolished the section of the Prussian Ministry of Culture, which had been established in 1841 to deal with Catholic interests, principally for the reason, as he stated in his memoirs, that Polish agitation was carried on by it. In February, 1872, a law was passed transferring the supervision of the schools to the State, the object of which was to counteract the influence of the clergy on the children, which was being used everywhere in the interests of Ultramontanism, and in Posen also for the purpose of promoting the Polish cause.

These acts and the whole course of the *Kulturkampf* confirmed the hostility of the Poles and Cashubes, and created an atmosphere which produced Bismarck's offensive, or as it may perhaps be more accurately called, his counter-offensive, against the Poles.

The Colonisation Law of 1886 provided funds—which were subsequently increased—for the purchase of land in Posen and West Prussia and for the settlement of German peasants and workmen, and it was followed by the setting up of a Colonisation Commission, which immediately commenced to implement it.

The Poles replied by founding, in the same year, a bank (the Ziemski Bank) for the promotion of Polish colonisation. By the beginning of 1892, however, the institution was on the verge of bankruptcy. This was two years after Bismarck's retirement, and coincided, therefore, with the short interval of conciliation which followed under the chancellorship of Caprivi. The Poles during this period supported the Government and received far-reaching concessions. The Ziemski Bank was saved by the Prussian Government, which granted credits at the low rate of interest of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. For four years following this the bank worked in conjunction with the Prussian Government, acting as "financial intermediary between the Government and the private undertakings," and "carrying out a necessary part of the work of parcelling, to which the Government is not called."¹

By that time the Poles had recovered from their initial difficulties, new banks had been founded, and the struggle for the land then became decisive.

The conciliation period, however, was already at an end. In 1894, when Archbishop Stablewski carried out a visitation through his diocese, the enthusiasm with which he was received bore so marked a flavour of Polish nationalism that the German press became disquieted. Agitatorial speeches made by Poles at a Polish national festival held at Lemberg in September of the same year definitely terminated the friendly overtures which had been made. Pan-Polish agitation was intensified and called forth sharp repressive measures, which included the prohibition of the use of the Polish language at meetings.

In 1901 the language question again became critical. Polish was still prohibited for the majority of lessons in the schools, and also at meetings. The Poles now made a determined effort to

¹ From a Report of the Ziemski Bank.

secure greater recognition for their language. Meetings were held in Polish, and were broken up by the police. In the same year a strike broke out in the schools of a township in the province of Posen, the children refusing to speak German during religious instruction. The developments which arose out of the strike caused a storm of indignation in the Polish world.

A more serious strike of the same nature occurred in 1906 and 1907 in Posen and West Prussia, involving roughly 60,000 children. This strike left a feeling of extreme bitterness in the minds of the Poles and Cashubes, and strengthened their determination to defend their language and nationality.

Meanwhile, in 1896, the struggle for the land had entered upon its most intensive stage. The Poles, despite the measures taken against them, still gained ground rapidly. Their organisations multiplied and increased in strength. Between 1880 and 1913 their number rose from 120 to roughly 300.

In 1904 a supplementary law was passed which made the erection of buildings on land which might be bought in the Polish provinces subject to the sanction of the governor of the regency. The object of this was to prevent Poles from settling on land purchased by them, but it was defeated by the device of allocating the new holdings to adjacent houses. The effect of the supplementary law was therefore to compel the Polish land banks and organisations to adopt what was the most economical method of parcelling.

In 1908 a law was passed which empowered the Prussian Government to expropriate property in the possession of Poles against compensation. This measure on its introduction was opposed by the large property owners in Prussia, by the Catholic Centre Party, and by the West German Liberals. Both Conservatives and Liberals were agreed that the impartiality of the law courts must be maintained, that private property must remain sacrosanct and that no attempt should be made to ruin the racial minority economically. Many members of the Prussian *Herrenhaus* (notably Gustav Schmoller, the famous economist) voted for the measure only because they felt or hoped that, while the Government's hand should be strengthened by an ultimate power of expropriation, it might never be compelled to use it. Great umbrage, however, was taken at foreign criticism, even by the leader of Liberal Union. In introducing the Bill, Prince Bülow said that it was only intended to acquire land which was required for the carrying out of definite colonisation schemes

and it would only be taken against full compensation. "Only for the defence of 'Deutschtum' would this sharp weapon be used." A policy of expulsion, he said, was being carried out not by the Germans, but by the Poles; it was being carried out in a quiet, unostentatious, but nevertheless effective manner. A policy of conciliation had been tried by the Prussian State repeatedly since 1815, and for the last time during the period from 1891 to 1894, but it had always been defeated by the pertinacious and energetic opposition of the Poles.

This law was not implemented until 1912, when four properties, aggregating 1,656 hectares, were taken over. They were paid for at the rate of 2,119 marks per hectare, although the market price at the time was not more than 1,800 marks.

During the period from 1896 to 1913, the period when, as already stated, Prussian repressive measures against the Poles reached their maximum severity, real estate in the hands of Germans declined by 98,000 hectares in the Government areas of Posen (21,000 ha.), Bromberg (31,000), Danzig (20,000), and Marienwerder (26,000). If account is taken of transfers of property to Poles in the neighbouring provinces, the total German holding will have declined by more than 120,000 hectares.

The operations of the Colonisation Commission had had the effect of hardening the prices of land, which had brought a good many of the old German estates on the market. The result was that 71 per cent. of the land allotted to German peasants was obtained from German estate owners. Altogether, between 1896 and 1913, the Colonisation Commission bought 466,756 hectares, of which 334,207 was obtained from German owners. The area allotted to peasants was 309,475 hectares, the balance passing from the possession of the Prussian to that of the Polish State.

German tradespeople and professional men in the areas in which the land was passing into Polish hands found their existence becoming more and more precarious. Out of the total of 64 Kreise in the provinces of West Prussia and Posen, 49 underwent marked polonisation.

Although standard German historical works abound in such declarations as: "Flottwell was appointed lord-lieutenant in 1832, and together with General von Grolman promoted the work of germanisation"¹; "Energetically the Government took

Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte, Bruno Gebhardt, 1913, vol. II, page 585.

up the struggle against the Poles for the germanisation of the Eastern provinces"¹; and "Through the attitude of the Government during the school strike, the Cashubes, however, recognised that they were to be germanised"² there is nothing in history to show that this process was one of unprovoked or forcible de-nationalisation. Clearly, it was hoped—up to the time of Bismarck at least—that the Polish populations would gradually and voluntarily become good Germans. That there was a conscious policy on these lines is shown by the advocacy of Flottwell and Grolman, in the Cabinet debates after the rising of 1830, of the continuance of the system of "gradual germanisation" which was already being practised. Felix Koneczny, the Polish historian, in his *History of Silesia*, published in 1897, admits that the Government did not germanise by force, but states that germanisation nevertheless advanced.³ The impartial treatment of Polish officials, which has been admitted by at least one Polish historian,⁴ also supports the view that whatever germanisation was proceeding, was intended to take place peacefully. This policy was only abandoned when it was realised that in the absence of positive measures the territories were doomed to complete polonisation. So far as the last period is concerned, the movement of land into the possession of Poles, as shown by the figures given above, certainly suggests that it was not the Poles who were on the defensive.

¹ *Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte*, Bruno Gebhardt, 1913, vol. II, page 774.

² *Geschichte der Kaschuben*, Dr. Lorentz, page 132.

³ *History of Silesia*, 1897—"Rząd pruski nie germanizował gwałtownie, ale umiał germanizować."

⁴ Jos. Buzek: *History of the National Policy of the Prussian Government towards the Poles*, 1909:

"One cannot say that the Prussian Government up till 1871 treated the Polish officials worse than the German." ("*Nie można powiedzieć, iżby rząd pruski do roku 1871 traktował urzędników Polaków w gorzej od Niemców.*")

II

EAST PRUSSIA

ACCORDING to the census of 1907, 53.2 per cent. of the total population were dependent on agriculture, as against 27.1 per cent. for the whole of Germany.

The re-drawing of the frontier has given rise to many administrative and economic difficulties. In individual communes, the greater parts of which have remained in East Prussia, the railway stations have been cut off. Marienburg and Tilsit have lost their hinterland, the position at Tilsit being aggravated by the fact that the city waterworks have been cut off.

About 21 kilometres of roads have had to be made to restore communications cut in the immediate proximity of the frontier. Further 109 kilometres of first-class roads, however, have been rendered necessary to re-adapt the economic life of the province. The cost of these will be nearly £150,000.

A new railway line has been built from Freystadt to Bishops-werder, the station at the latter place having been cut off. A new line is to be built between Gilgenburg and Neidenburg, to replace the section of line between these two places which passed through Soldau, and which has been broken. A new section of narrow-gauge railway between Gr. Weide and Gutsch is necessary for the same reason.

By far the more serious losses, however, have been caused by the isolation of the province from the Corridor territory and Memel, and beyond these areas from the mainland of Germany and Russia.

Considerable trade passed before the war between West and East Prussia, and in lesser degree between Posen and East Prussia. The total amount of freight carried on the railways between these areas in 1913 was 861,228 tons, this representing roughly one-third of the total railway traffic between East Prussia and the remainder of Germany. The dispatch of goods from East Prussia to the Corridor and Posen in 1924-25, the last full year before the breaking out of the Polish-German customs war, represented only 4.9 per cent. of the total consigned from East Prussia; the total received by rail was between 2.7 and 1.8 per cent. of the total from all sources.

The principal articles of exchange were grain, flour, fodder, pulse, timber, etc. The total amount of agricultural produce exchanged in 1913 was 220,000 tons, as against 9,632 tons in 1924 and 17,053 tons in 1925. Considerable numbers of cattle were also exchanged between the territories, the totals dispatched from East Prussia being : 1913, 191,000 head; 1924, 1,200 head; 1925, 1,700 head. The distilleries in the Corridor were formerly considerable buyers of lean cattle. East Prussian saw-mills also exported a considerable proportion of their products to the Corridor territory.

The interposition of the Corridor has roughly doubled the average distance over which East Prussian goods have to be sent to be marketed, and over which the province has to draw its supplies of raw material and machinery. It is calculated that the additional railway freights incurred by the province amount to 19½ million marks a year. This additional burden on the economy has the twofold effect of raising the cost of production on the one hand and handicapping the marketing of the goods on the other, these disadvantages being over and above those which the province shares with the remainder of Germany. Preferential freights have been granted, but a limit is imposed on the preference by the fact that the goods have to pass over the Polish railways in the Corridor, which charge the full freights on goods passing between East Prussia and the remainder of Germany, but allow preferential tariffs for Polish goods. Polish goods, therefore, have a freight advantage up to the German frontier, so that the distance which they have to traverse over German railways to Berlin, the principal market, is short compared with that which separates East Prussia from Berlin.

The supply of cheap fodder from Russia, which was necessary for the development of the cattle rearing industry of the province, has entirely ceased, so that these supplies now have to be obtained over much greater distances via Hamburg and Bremen, and in part from Rumania. The resulting increase in prices has had the effect of restricting the quantities obtained, and has thrown what was a highly scientific intensive cattle rearing industry more or less back to the primitive days of pasturage. The quantities of fodder imported by rail from Russia were : 1913, 219,216 tons; 1924-27, average, 36,094 tons. Imports of fodder from all sources amounted in 1913 to 346,547 tons, and to an annual average of 136,237 tons for the years 1924-27.

The timber export trade of the province has been especially hard hit, since the Poles, by preferential freights, have diverted all the export timber to Danzig. This also applies to the whole of the transit trade which passed through Königsberg and which had to cross present Polish territory.

Through-traffic crossing the Corridor is regulated by Convention, and is working at present as smoothly as the existing arrangements will permit. A delay of about 30 per cent., however, is caused in goods traffic, in consequence of customs formalities. The delay in the case of piece goods is greater, since these can only be carried in closed wagons, which necessitates transshipment at the frontier stations. The transport of express freight is rendered difficult, because only one slow passenger train travels in each direction on each route per day, and the Polish authorities will only accept three goods wagons on each train. In the case of the transport of cattle this is a serious handicap.

The possibilities of sea transit, which played an important part in the economic life of the province before the war, remain, but even here outgoing freights are raised artificially by the lack of return cargoes.

The extent to which the province has abandoned intensive methods of farming is indicated by the official returns showing the areas under cultivation by the different classes of crops. The area under grain and pulse has decreased by 6.5 per cent. as compared with a decrease for the whole of Prussia of 4.4 per cent.; land lying fallow has decreased by 2.1 per cent., as against a decrease of 12.1 per cent. in Prussia; while pasturage has increased by 28.2 per cent., as against an increase of only 10.6 per cent. for the whole of Prussia. It is shown also by the quantities of artificial manure used. In 1927 the average quantities of artificial manure used in Prussia as a whole were 133 per cent. higher than before the war (i.e., 100:233); in East Prussia the quantities used had dropped to 83 per cent.

There are no statistics to show the actual position of East Prussian industry, trade, and handicrafts, but the export figures given above indicate the extent of the decline. This is also confirmed by the statistics of the total goods traffic exchanged by rail between East Prussia, including East Prussian ports, and the remainder of Germany and foreign countries: 1913: 1,121,252 tons; 1924: 680,124 tons; 1925: 714,609 tons; 1926: 514,457 tons; 1927, 543,943 tons.

The agricultural and other economic interests of the province have worked energetically to restore the economic well-being of the country. The East Prussian Chamber of Agriculture has taken up the questions of the standardisation and of the creation of local brands of agricultural produce; of the establishment of a central marketing organisation; of the training of farmers and farm workers; and of agricultural research. The Chamber has also promoted the formation of associations of stock-breeders, of model farms, and of experimental rings. An important industry has been founded in the opening of a conserved meat factory.

The Eastern Fair (Ostmesse) has been founded with a view to the revival of trade relations with the East and of intermediary trade between East and West. The Economic Institute for Russia and the Baltic States is intended to promote the same objects.

Königsberg docks have been enlarged and improved; an aerodrome has been built, and a direct air-service instituted between Berlin, Königsberg, and Moscow, to which is to be added a connection between Königsberg, Tilsit, and Memel.

An "East Prussian Company for Foreign Trade" has also been formed for the promotion of foreign trade, and a section for foreign trade in the Chamber of Agriculture.

As a result of these activities an improvement in trade with Russia has already become evident, although progress is necessarily slow. Considerable numbers of horses, cattle, and breeding sheep have already been sold to Russia; the export of Russian lentils via Königsberg is reviving, and also, in lesser degree, the export of fodder, fruit, eggs, and leather.

A certain respite has also been afforded by the granting of relief from the Reich and Prussian budgets. These have been used for the lowering of railway freights, for the issue of credits to industries and farmers, and for the liquidation of short term and expensive liabilities in respect of bills of exchange by the creation of land mortgages, thereby lowering the interest charges.

The assistance to be granted out of Reich funds to East Prussia has now been defined in a Bill which has been laid before the Reichstag and Reichsrat by the Government of the Reich. The measure provides for the following subsidies to the province—reduction of freights: three annual payments of £500,000; reduction of port charges: three annual payments of £15,000; narrow-gauge railways: a sum of £85,000; town-planning and

land settlement : £1,000,000 out of a total of £2,500,000 voted for the whole of the Reich, and a further £900,000 for the enlargement of existing peasant holdings; maintenance of insolvent farming undertakings : £400,000; reduction of interest charges : £150,000; relief of communal rates, £350,000; guarantees for conversion to long term loans of credits to handicrafts, fisheries, and small farmers : £350,000 to £400,000.

The measures of relief carried out by the Prussian State will be continued independently of the above. These will include the provision of several million marks for the purchase of estates, the development of domain lands, and afforestation, and three million marks for the maintenance of communal schools.

III

CONVENTION BETWEEN DANZIG AND POLAND NOVEMBER 9th, 1920

THIS convention commences with a recital of Articles 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, and 108 of the Treaty of Versailles, relating to the constitution of the Free City of Danzig, and the relations of the Free City between Poland and the League of Nations.

The Convention itself, signed by MM. Ignace and Paderewski on behalf of Poland, by Herr Sahm (Burgomaster) and Deputy Schummer on behalf of Danzig, consists of five chapters and forty articles.

Chapter I concerns mainly the international relations of the free city. The foreign relations of the free city shall be conducted by Poland, which country shall have its own diplomatic representative in Danzig to act as intermediary between the two Governments. Poland to undertake the protection of Danzig nationals and interests abroad. The Article stipulates that no treaty or international agreement affecting the interests of Danzig shall be concluded by Poland without prior consultation with the Free City. All such treaties to be subject to the veto of the High Commissioner of the League if authorised by the Council of the League of Nations. The Free City to raise no foreign loans

without preliminary consultation with Poland (Act 7). Dispute in this matter to be referred to the High Commissioner.

Article 8 deals with the right to fly the Danzig trade flag at sea, and the establishment of Polish administrative services for the registration and maintenance of Polish ships.

The remaining articles of this chapter deal with the rights of the flag, the jurisdiction of the police in regard to foreigners in Danzig, which, under reserve of Poland's special interests, was to be exercised by Danzig, the equal treatment of Polish and Danzig shipping. Communications between Danzig and East Prussia were to be regulated by a treaty to be signed subsequently by Poland and Germany.

Chapter II deals exclusively with customs. Danzig to be within the Polish customs line and Poland to have the right to maintain customs officials. A share ($7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.) of the customs receipts to be allotted to Danzig.

Chapter III deals with the establishment of the Danzig Port and Waterways Board, the transfer of railways, officials, employees and workpeople, and of goods and property formerly belonging to the German Government.

Article 19 provides that "A Board shall be appointed entitled the Danzig Port and Waterways Board, composed of an equal number (which shall not exceed five) of Polish and Danzig Commissioners." The President of the Board to be chosen by mutual agreement, but should no agreement as to this be reached within one month of the signature of the Treaty, a President of Swiss nationality to be appointed by the League. Should a vacancy occur in the office of President the same procedure to be adopted within one month of the occurrence of such a vacancy. The President to be appointed for three years; to be eligible for reappointment; to preside over all discussions and to endeavour to reconcile the parties; to vote only after having exhausted every means of bringing the parties to an understanding, and his casting vote to be decisive in event of an equal division. The costs and expenditure of the board to be met by receipts of the service administered by it.

The Board to exercise control over all waterways, as well as the railways serving the port, and to maintain as far as possible the *personnel* actually employed in the various services. In engaging new officials or employees no discrimination shall be exercised against Polish nationals (Article 40).

Railways other than those serving the port, apart from light railroads and tramways to be controlled and administered by Poland (Article 21).

A further agreement between Poland and Danzig, to be signed within four months of the coming into force of the present treaty, should regulate conditions of service for *personnel* employed in the railways, arrange problems of language and currency, and regulate further matters arising from Article 21, and in event of no agreement being reached the questions to be referred to the High Commissioner.

Chapter IV deals with the establishment of postal, telegraphic, and telephone services in Danzig by Poland. A special convention to be concluded within six months to establish uniform rates for postal, telegraphic, and telephone services between Poland and Danzig. Danzig to have the right to maintain its local postal services for its local needs and to have direct postal services with foreign countries.

Chapter V deals with the protection of minorities, conditions of naturalisation, the unification of currency systems and the settlement of disputes.

Danzig agreed to grant to the Polish minority in the Free City the same rights as are accorded to minorities in Poland under the Treaty of Versailles, and not to discriminate in any way against Polish nationals or the Polish-speaking element. A special arrangement should be made for the reciprocal execution of legal judgments and the extradition of criminals. Negotiations should be begun as soon as possible for the establishment of a uniform currency, and the Polish Government undertook to facilitate the supply of fuel and foodstuffs to the Free City. Matters not dealt with by the present convention should be made the subject of subsequent agreement. Article 39, frequently cited in earlier articles provided that points of difference between the two governments arising from this or subsequent conventions should be referred to the decision of the High Commissioner, who might, if he deemed it necessary, apply to the Council of the League of Nations. Both parties reserved the right of appeal against a decision of the High Commissioner, to the Council of the League.

The Convention was to come into force upon the establishment of the Free City, and could not be amended without the consent of both parties.

A supplementary convention between Poland and Danzig was signed at Warsaw, October 24th, 1921, which regulated in detail the conditions of Polish and Danzig nationality, legal matters, post, navigation, customs, and excise, imports, and exports, the supply of raw materials, fuel, and provisions by Poland to the Free City.

IV

THE CHORZOW CASE

IN July, 1922, Poland seized the nitrate factory at Chorzow, entered in the land register as the Oberschlesische Stickstoffwerke, alleging that the factory did not in reality belong to the company but to the German Reich, the latter having been owner till December, 1919, when it had arranged a sale which Poland claimed to be fictitious and contrary to the Treaty of Versailles and the Armistice Convention. They justified the seizure under the law of July 14th, 1920, which provided that the Polish State should automatically be substituted for the German State in cases where the latter had been entered in land registers since November 11th, 1918, as owners of property. This law, Poland claimed, gave effect to the right enjoyed by Poland under the Treaty of Versailles and other international agreements, rights which were not affected by the Geneva Convention regarding the partition of Upper Silesia. In any case measures taken under this law could not be regarded as liquidation under Arts. 6-22 of the Geneva Convention.

Germany's contention was that the sale of the factory to the Oberschlesische Stickstoffwerke was *bona fide* and real, and that Poland's seizure of this factory was an infringement of the Geneva Convention.

In December, 1924 the Polish Government announced its intention of expropriating a large number of landed estates in Upper Silesia.

On May 15th, 1925, the German Government appealed in both cases to the Permanent Court of International Justice. Poland contested the jurisdiction of this court, but the court, on August 25th, upheld its jurisdiction. On May 25th, 1926 it delivered

judgment in respect to the Chorzow works and eight estates—a number of cases having been withdrawn.

With regard to the estates, the court decided that liquidation was permissible only where expressly authorised by the Geneva Convention. It upheld Poland's action in some cases—including one, contested by Germany, on the ground that the owners, the municipality of Ratibor, could not be regarded as a German "national"—and dismissed it in others where industrial interests were proved which, under the Geneva Convention, gave exemption from expropriation, and in one case where the proprietorship proved to be of Czecho-Slovak nationality at the decisive date. The Court decided that the seizure of the Chorzow works under the Polish law of July 14th, 1920, violated the Geneva Convention, and that Poland could not quote any title under international law sanctioning her law in overriding that convention. The contract of sale between the German Government and the Oberschlesische Stickstoffwerke was valid and *bona fide*, as were also the contracts of that company with the Bayrische Stickstoffwerke. The attitude of the Polish Government toward these companies was not in conformity with the Geneva Convention.

The German Government subsequently to this decision filed claims for compensation against Poland to the extent of 521,000,000 marks (£26,500,000), M135,000,000 (£6,750,000) being for settlers evicted under the law of July 14th, 1920; M90,000,000 (£4,500,000) for large estates; M100,000,000 (£5,000,000) for the Chorzow factory and other expropriations.

The Chorzow case was settled on November 12th, 1928, by agreement between the Polish Minister of Commerce and representatives of the Bavarian and Upper Silesian Nitrogen Works, the Polish Government agreeing to pay compensation to the two companies, payment being spread over the period from December 15th, 1928, to December 15th, 1943. The settlement was confirmed on November 27th by an exchange of notes between Mr. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, and Herr Rauscher, the German Ambassador at Warsaw.

V

NOTES

Chapter XVII.—Upper Silesia, Pt. V. Effect of the Partition.

In connection with the decline of Polish votes in German Upper Silesia in the Elections to the Reichstag in May, 1928, Korfanty's newspaper, "Polonia," wrote:—

"It is with pain that we must take cognizance of our defeat and of the defeat of all minorities living in Germany. It must unfortunately be stated that the present political and economic conditions in Polish Upper Silesia, and their inevitable and comprehensible reactions on the attitude of the inhabitants of German Upper Silesia, have provided anti-Polish agitation with the most powerful arguments."

Another passage in "Polonia" on the same subject was as follows:—

"Take for instance the latest elections to the Polish Sejm. Our compatriots across the frontier are fully aware of the complaints made by the inhabitants of Eastern Upper Silesia of pressure exercised on voters, of official coercive measures, and of the political exploitation of the economic position of the voters.

"Nor are they less fully aware of the use of ballot papers of green and other colours, with the aid of which it was ascertained how persons were voting. Neither has the abolition of the isolated voting cabinets in the ballot rooms, which had been instituted in consequence of repeated representations of the German Government, borne testimony to the democratic nature of Polish conditions or to any respect for the will of the people. The breaking up of election meetings of Opposition parties, threats, and assaults which have been committed have influenced the country people in German Upper Silesia unfavourably, and have given rise to the conviction that justice in Poland is on an insecure footing."

Chapter XVII.—Upper Silesia, Pt. VI. Minorities and Schools.

(i) In May last (1928), when applications for the admission of entrant children to the schools of Upper Silesia were being made for the ensuing year, the officials appointed to receive and examine the applications were almost exclusively headmasters of Polish schools. The hours during which applications could be

received were reduced from eight to four daily. The parents in the villages who were going to apply for the admission of their children to the minority schools were known in advance, because applications in respect of the Polish schools had been taken a week earlier. The fathers themselves were obliged to attend to register the children, and in many cases had to lose two days' work for the purpose. A declaration had to be signed in respect of each child that it spoke *only* German. (The formula submitted by the German Organisation was that the language of the child was German.) Parents who insisted on signing the declaration were cross-examined for, in some cases, twenty minutes, and were asked in particular where they were employed—a question the significance of which was obvious. They were warned that if the declaration as drawn up and signed was found to be untrue, they would lose their work and be sent to prison. In a number of cases, parents were subsequently discharged from their employment. In certain places (e.g. Godulähütte) parents who had insisted on sending their children to minority schools were threatened by members of the Union of Insurrectionists, windows were broken, and actual assault was even resorted to. An issue of the "Oberschlesischer Kurier" containing an article by a German Deputy, Dr. Paul, describing the conditions, was confiscated.

(ii) At the annual meeting of the Westmarkenverein for Polish Upper Silesia, which was held at Kattowitz in the summer of last year (1928), a report on the activities of the Association was read, which gave particulars of the results which had been attained in the suppression of minority schools. In 1926 applications had been made in thirty places for the establishment of Germany minority schools, but thanks to the work of the Association only one had been opened. In 1927 three applications for schools had been received, none of which had been granted. The intensive work of the local committees of the Association had resulted in the transfer of 1,547 children from the German to Polish schools.

(iii) In a speech made before the Society for the Study of Foreign Affairs at Warsaw on March 24th last, Mr. Zaleski, the Polish Foreign Minister, said that Germany had no reason to fear a generalisation of the question of the protection of minorities, because it had voluntarily conceded to its minorities the rights laid down in the Minority Treaties, which it had not been required to sign.

Chapter XVII.—Upper Silesia, Pt. VII. Convention at Work.

(i) Towards the end of 1928 Herr Treitschke, the commercial manager of the Pless mines, was notified by the police authorities that as from December 31st, 1928, his permit to reside in Poland was cancelled. No reasons were given. Herr Treitschke at once appealed to the Administrative Court at Warsaw, but no decision has yet been announced. The German embassy at Warsaw also made representations to the Polish authorities, but without result.

(ii) It was reported on April 10th, 1929, that the Inspectorate of Mines at Kattowitz had cancelled the certificates of six foremen at the Dubensko Mine. These men, who belong to the German minority and are members of the Deutscher Volksbund, had been employed as mining foremen for many years. Their certificates were confirmed by the Polish mining authorities seven years ago when the partition took place. An appeal is said to have been addressed to the League of Nations.

Chapter XVIII.—Minority Problems.

The report of the German Union in the Sejm and the Senate, published in the Posener Tageblatt, No. 287 of December 17th, 1927, states that the Union had brought in numerous interpellations with regard to the treatment of the German minority in Poland. With regard to schools, it had been complained that German schools had been illegally staffed with Polish teachers; that school and Kreis inspectorates had not included representatives of the Lutheran confession; that German children had been removed by force from German schools; that persons of German nationality, whose citizenship had not been definitely determined, had been expelled; that the authorities had failed to confirm German members of school management committees; that German children had been compelled to attend Polish church festivals; that German children had been prevented from attending elementary schools with instruction in the German language; that property of German women's unions, and German humanitarian institutions, of established utility, such as almshouses, and students' hostels, had been confiscated and liquidated; that religious institutions, such as churches, chapels, and mortuaries, had been confiscated. The German Union had also protested against anti-German demonstrations in districts inhabited by Germans in considerable numbers; against the support given to these demonstrations by the Polish public and

by the lower Polish authorities; against the prohibition of German songs, and dances at children's entertainments; and against the illegal refusal of Polish registrars to publish the banns of marriage of persons of German nationality. In a number of German Protestant parishes attendance at church had been prohibited; illegal house searches had been made and documents illegally seized from the offices, business premises, and homes of German members of the Sejm, who as such, possessed immunity. German associations and other organisations had been illegally dissolved; freedom of the press had been curtailed as far as German editors were concerned; German newspapers had been illegally seized; the amnesty law had been unfairly administered to the disadvantage of German editors; peaceful German citizens had been placed under surveillance; theatrical performances had been prohibited; German meetings of an ecclesiastical or religious character had been disturbed and broken up; German churches and chapels had been confiscated and handed over to Roman Catholic parishes; chapels had been burnt down; German cemeteries desecrated; and German deputies mishandled.

Chapter XIX.—The Consequences and the Future.

(i) Lord D'Abernon wrote in his diary, which was recently published :—

“As I have already mentioned, many Polish leaders have emphasized the necessity of an annexation of East Prussia by Poland, of East Prussia, the cradle of the Prussian State, where at the present date out of 2,250,000 inhabitants hardly 100,000 belong to the National Minorities.”

(ii) A book published in Paris in March last, entitled “And To-morrow,” by Pierre Valmigiére, contains the following passage :—

“How many Frenchmen know that Poland is by no means satisfied with all that we have given it? The Polish Nationalists want Silesia from Beuthen to Oppeln, the whole of the Ukraine, Danzig, and even East Prussia. I know what I say, for I have before me speeches by Polish statesmen, newspapers, and citizens. And we are to risk a future war with Germany for Poland's sake! If we want peace we must come to an understanding with Germany. Let us bury the old hatchet. The future must be built up on a new basis : on the foundation of reason.”

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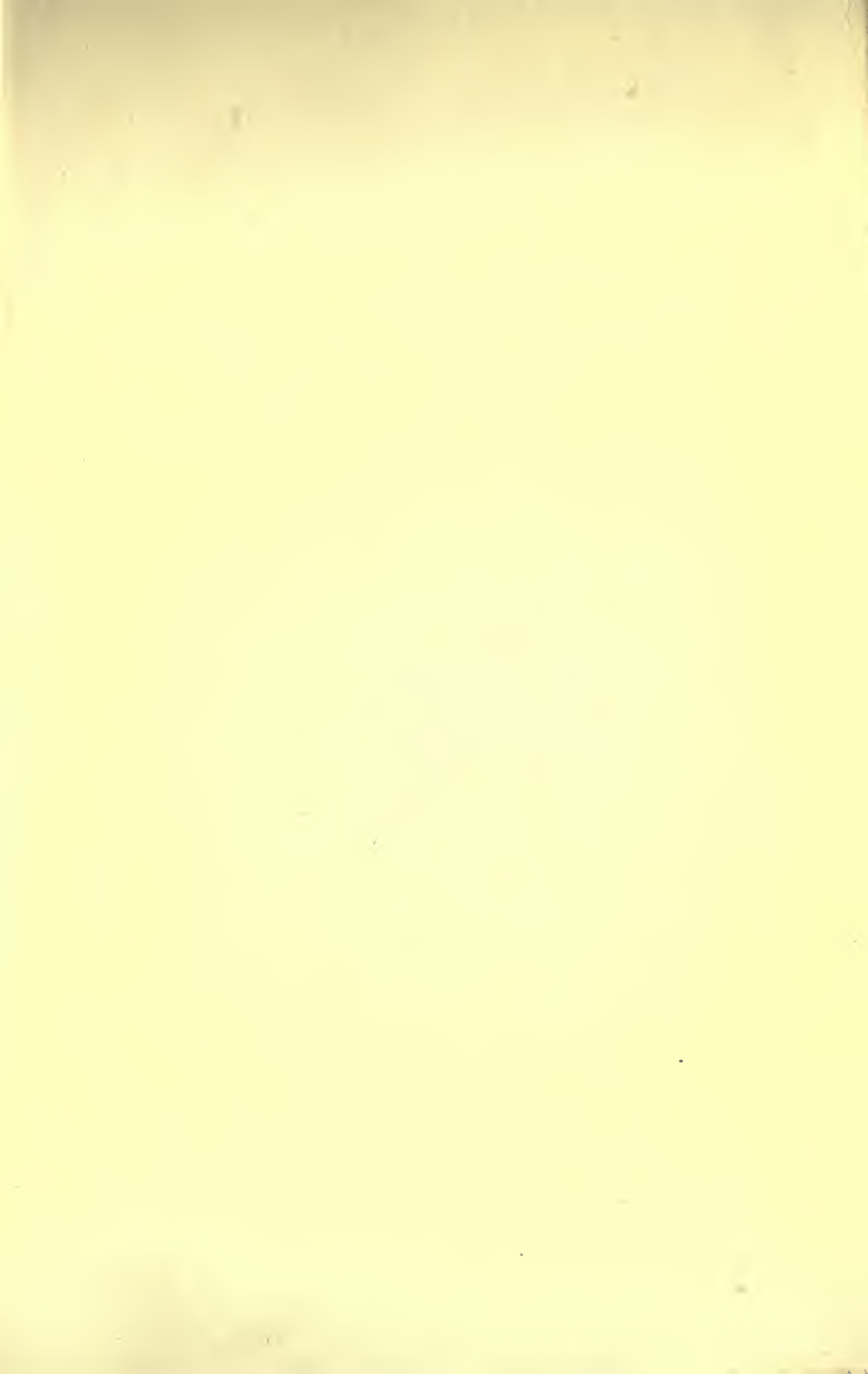
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